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General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

110th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 17 April 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Reyn (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting (A/50/525)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/926)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.69)

The Acting President: This afternoon the Assembly will continue its plenary meetings devoted to public administration and development.

I call on the Permanent Representative of Guyana.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): We have all come to realize that effective and efficient public administration is a key element in the promotion of development. My Government is therefore pleased to see that it is being accorded such high priority in the deliberations of the General Assembly. We welcome the opportunity afforded us to participate in this debate.

In recent years there has been a marked tendency to diminish the importance of public administration. This accompanied the belief that more things could be left to the magic hand of the market. In some quarters it even became fashionable to see government as a problem, to denounce big government. We have also seen a tendency on the part of some aid donors and creditor agencies to seek to diminish or to minimize the functions of the local public administration in developing countries, either by urging that many areas of responsibility be relinquished altogether or by seeking to bypass the administration. They prefer to deal directly with the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

This may be the result of a tendency to set up a false dichotomy between private enterprise and public administration. It should be clear to all who study the history of industrialized countries, and that of the newly industrialized countries, that economic progress is due both to good public administration and to individual initiative which good Governments have actively facilitated and fostered. No country has made economic progress without positive stimulus from good Governments. This has been understood since the 1960s, when the United Nations began its important work in support of public administration, particularly in new States.

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

In recent years there has been something of a reaction to what had been perceived as excessive or inefficient participation by some Governments in public life. We believe the time has come for us to have a better understanding of the contribution of public administration, particularly for economic growth. We hope that the debate this week will help provide understanding of the proper contribution of public administration in the 1990s. In this regard, we are considerably helped by the various reports before the Assembly at this meeting, including the Secretary General's report contained in document A/50/847 and the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting.

Good public administration operates in many ways that are relevant to economic growth. As has been said, it is the steel frame on which the edifice of development is constructed. Public services have the first and foremost responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. It is now generally agreed that economic development occurs only in societies where there is rule of law, where contracts are upheld, where legal agreements are fully enforceable within the system and where, as a consequence, entrepreneurs — both local and foreign — can confidently invest. For this a public administration system which provides and maintains a transparent and impartial system of law and which is utterly predictable represents a firm basis for development. That role cannot be privatized; neither can the role of providing order for the peace and safety of persons and of society. The whole State must be covered by effective courts and competent police forming part of an efficient administration.

To these basic functions must be added, particularly in developing countries, an ever growing list of services providing infrastructure — such as roads and airports — education, public health and protection for the environment. In this context, Guyana recently participated in the Interregional Seminar on the Role of Public Administration in Developing Infrastructure and Protecting the Environment, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 6 March to 8 March 1996. Sustainable development of our national resources remains a vital issue for us.

Although still insufficiently developed in many developing countries, the question of appropriate research capacity needs to be carefully addressed. In developing countries much more attention needs to be given to this. As an example, consider the role to be played by public services in overcoming health deficiencies in society — such as measures to improve nutrition or to reduce debilitating disease — which can considerably aid in increasing productivity and thus further development.

As a country which is itself in the throes of economic and social reconstruction and in the promotion of people-centred development, Guyana recognizes the importance of a strong and effective public administration. My Government is committed to the development of an administration at both the central and regional levels. Important also is the management of the process of decentralization between the central Government and the administration of the 10 administrative regions that make up our country, and of coordination between individual agencies of government. To ensure sound management, we have taken steps to strengthen public administration through the rationalization and consolidation of public sector resources, public sector institutional reform and enhanced social sector performance, particularly in education.

It goes without saying that education is essential to modernization and development. Proper management of primary, secondary and tertiary education is required in order to turn out educated and skilled manpower. In this context, it is important to underline the need for special efforts in educational research to promote development. My Government fully recognizes that good public services require an appropriate share of the national income, and it is progressively increasing the investment necessary for providing all vital social services.

Very few Governments today, either developed or developing, are as free of corruption as they would like to be. It is clear that corruption is a serious obstacle to economic progress. We learn from the history of developed countries, which were notorious for corruption in the nineteenth century, that a great improvement in behaviour came about only when there was a change in public opinion and when civil servants began to be accorded the importance which their role demands. We must take all necessary steps to arrest corruption in public service everywhere so as to ensure the highest standards of performance.

My own Government continues to stress accountability and transparency in our efforts to eliminate corruption, and we have now established an Integrity Commission. In so doing, we have provided an environment for a new culture of ethics in the public service, with honesty and dedication as the driving forces. Additionally, Guyana recently initialled in Caracas the inter-American convention against corruption.

Finally, I wish to stress that public administration in developing countries must adopt a kind of pioneering and promotional role to invite and facilitate industry, to encourage participation in foreign trade, to facilitate the provision of credit to farmers and businessmen, to foster new manufacturers and technologies, and so on. Governments in developing countries cannot afford to take a *laissez-faire* attitude. One must overcome negative stereotyping of the public service. Effective public administration is a great asset to any country — particularly to one that is on the path to development.

Thus, we are committed to providing suitable conditions to attract the best and the brightest to the civil service. It used to be the case in many developing countries, such as my own, that the public service attracted young men and women of remarkable ability, and, indeed, the United Nations later became one of the beneficiaries in this context. We have had many top national civil servants from developing countries who rendered great service as staff members of the United Nations. Today we look to the United Nations and its agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to assist us in rebuilding our weakened administrative structures and to improve our systems of national governance.

I would like to pay tribute in this regard to UNDP and to the United Nations Division of Public Administration and Development Management, which have always supported efforts to upgrade the expertise and professionalism of civil servants in our countries. The Division's advisory services, its seminars and publications and its fellowships to young cadres have all been of inestimable value to many nations such as ours. The Division discharges one of the most important functions of the United Nations, together with UNDP, and their efforts deserve to be appreciated and supported by this Assembly.

In conclusion, I would also like to encourage donor countries to share more of their experience of modern public administration. This can be done through technology transfer and by assisting with new skills, such as increased use of electronic data processing, as well as improved working methods and forms of organization.

Helping developing countries improve their services through consultation and support for training and development institutions remains a very cost-effective form of international assistance, and it is an excellent way — albeit an indirect one — to promote human development.

The need for capacity-building in public administration cannot be overemphasized. Developing countries such as mine will continue to need the support of the international community for their efforts to adapt their public machinery to the new demands which face us today.

The Acting President: I now call on the Deputy Permanent Representative of Egypt.

Mr. Awaad (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Public administration is one of the main pillars of development. In addition, it is the principal means by which government responds to the wishes and desires of peoples. Hence, the delegation of Egypt studied with great interest the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on public administration and development, as well as the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance.

In this connection, we would like to thank sisterly Morocco for its initiative based on the adoption of the Tangier Declaration at the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of the Civil Service, held in 1994.

Today's world is undergoing many intense, rapid and complex transformations at the social, economic and political levels. There are many challenges facing the process of development, such as the need to eliminate poverty, to achieve sustainable social and economic development, to enhance economic globalization, to protect and preserve our environment, to control rapid population growth and to find work opportunities for the increasing number of young people.

All this undoubtedly burdens State administrative organs, which must make rapid and constant adaptations to new variables in order to find the necessary solutions to old and new problems alike. In this context, I should like to outline Egypt's fundamental efforts in recent years to repair the State's administrative organs.

In 1991 the Egyptian Government began implementation of a comprehensive programme for economic reform. The main elements of the programme are, first, limiting the role played by the State in the process of production, a role that was expanded in the 1950s and 1960s. How the shift from public to private assets has started. Secondly, the private sector is encouraged to enhance its role in investment and production, since this is the main pillar of economic growth. The third element is the reduction of the State's budget deficit by making allocations in line with the new trends. Fourth is the reduction of inflation. The fifth element is the reduction of payment deficits, the gradual reduction of tariffs and the gradual elimination of non-tariff barriers to imports.

The implementation of this programme requires the State administrative organs to be refocused mainly on indicative planning and programmes, on paving the way economically for development and growth, and on creating a suitable legal environment in which the private sector can work. It must also concentrate more on the collection and analysis of data. This ambitious programme for economic reform and structural adjustment has necessitated a move away from public administration and towards privatization. This has led to a reduction in the budget deficit, which is now less than 2.6 per cent.

To satisfy the requirements of the new role of public administration, the Egyptian Government has, first, established a new Ministry for administrative development, whose main task is to control the State's reform plan for administrative organs by studying the feasibility of current government structures. Its tasks also include preventing duplication of work, enhancing the quality of the work, coordinating the activities of government organs and looking into the best ways to make use of these State administrative organs.

Additionally, the Egyptian Government has taken into consideration that the refocusing of the State administrative organs will not result in its having a more passive role in providing social services, and this should not hamper market mechanisms. The Government has adopted unconventional solutions. In confronting unemployment, it has established a social development fund independent of the government administration. Its role is not to create new job opportunities, as had not happened in the past. It also tries to assist young people in starting new micro-projects and tries to subsidize successful small and medium-sized projects, since they use more manpower.

One of the most salient challenges for the State administrative organ in its new role to face problem of overpopulation and to establish an organ independent of the government administration for work in the field of family planning. This should continue to be carried out effectively and without the creation of new levels of bureaucracy.

A new role for government administration has also emerged in the technology of communications and data collection. A new unit, part of the office of the Prime Minister, has been established. Through it a pragmatic programme providing the central and local government with this technology has been implemented, thus, avoiding a new central bureaucracy. This unit has evolved into a successful information centre occupying a distinguished place in the Middle East and in the developing world.

We have also concentrated on the training of higher administrative leadership and government employees. This will enhance the quality of government performance. A centre has been established to prepare leaders in the field of public administration.

The United Nations has a cardinal role in the field of public administration and development, dating back to 1948, when the International Centre for Training in Public Administration was established. The United Nations programme in public administration and finance helps many developing countries whose economies are in a state of transition; in addition, a considerable role is played by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Our intention is not simply to enumerate the activities of the Organization in the field of public administration, but rather to study, comparatively and otherwise, the means of enhancing its activities, particularly in exchanges of expertise and information between States.

Despite the differences between the circumstances of various developing countries, a general trend can be noted: democracy and market economies are being utilized for economic and social reforms. The success of this trend, along with the enhancement of public administration and the achievement of development, will depend on our recognition of the indispensable role of public administration in this endeavour. In addition, it will depend on the ability of the international community — the United Nations, donor countries and development agencies — to support the efforts of developing countries in these fields and to mobilize the necessary financial resources.

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Benin has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed on Monday, 15 April, at

5 p.m., may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of that delegation in the list of speakers.

I hear none. Benin is therefore included in the list.

I now call on Mr. J. Chiteyeye, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance of Malawi.

Mr. Chiteyeye (Malawi): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank you, Mr. Acting President, for giving us this opportunity to participate in this important discussion on public administration and development. We believe that there is indeed an urgent need for creating public administration systems that can effectively respond to the many challenges that our Governments face today around the globe, particularly in Africa.

In the case of Malawi, we have over the past three decades or so implemented a number of development programmes aimed at raising the standard of living of the people in our country. As a result of implementing the programmes, some gains were made, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, when we attained impressive economic growth rates at the national level.

Despite these gains, the incidence of poverty has remained severe and widespread. A good proportion of our people in Malawi still live under conditions of absolute poverty. It is against this background that the Government of Malawi has adopted poverty alleviation as its central theme for development. At this time we are carrying out reforms at grass-roots, district and national levels in order to create systems that will assist the Government in implementing the poverty alleviation programme. We are also redefining the Government's role in view of the growing role of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, local authorities and local communities in the development process.

In addition, the Government is currently facing serious financial problems which have, in turn, forced us to implement drastic public expenditure controls. The Government is therefore increasingly playing a coordinating role rather than the traditional role of producing goods and services.

At the grass-roots level, we are, with the assistance of the World Bank, training and empowering local communities to implement and manage their own development programmes. The Government's role in this project is to mobilize resources, both locally and from the donor community. The mobilized resources are then provided directly to local communities for construction of infrastructure, such as schools, health centres and water schemes. The implementation of these programmes is the responsibility of the local communities, with the facilitation of private companies, non-governmental organizations and local authorities where necessary. The maintenance of the infrastructure is also the responsibility of the local communities. The communities are further held accountable for the resources that the Government is providing.

At the district level, most programmes are still being implemented by the central Government through sectoral ministries. A decision has, however, been made to strengthen the capacity of the district councils so that they can fully take on the tasks of planning and implementing development programmes at that level. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is playing a very crucial role in the implementation of the decentralization programme, which is aimed at bringing the devolution of responsibility to the local people in the districts.

At the national level, the Government is implementing public service reforms that will help not only in the implementation of the poverty alleviation programme, but also in responding to the many demands that are being placed on the Government by the general public for the provision of social, economic and political stability, transparency and full respect for human rights.

The Assembly is aware that Malawi, like many other countries in Africa, has recently undergone a dramatic political transformation from a one-party system to a multi-party democracy. The United Nations has played a crucial role in this process, for which the people of Malawi are very grateful.

However, this political change has created great expectations for improvements in the delivery of goods and services by the Government. In addition, ordinary people today expect to participate fully in decision-making and in the implementation of development programmes. The Government is therefore implementing reforms in the public service in order to respond to these complex demands.

These reforms are aimed at achieving the following objectives: first, to improve the Government's ability to attract and retain a sufficient number of properly trained Malawians to meet professional and specialized manpower needs; and, secondly, to improve the morale, motivation and work ethic of civil servants through proactive measures, such as the regular review and rationalization of pay and benefits schemes.

The Government of Malawi recognizes that reform is a continuous process which requires a clear strategic plan. To this end, the Government has formulated a Civil Service Reform Action Plan which, among other things, includes the following: first, the establishment of a personnel information and control system that links personnel data to payroll data, on the basis of the results of a civil service census which we recently carried out; secondly, the identification of overlapping Government functions that are currently being carried out by different agencies and that in the future will either be eliminated or merged; thirdly, the identification of those government functions that will be privatized or contracted to the private sector; and, fourthly, the restructuring of the salary structure, on the basis of the results of a comprehensive job evaluation exercise.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the reform programme that we are implementing, the Government of Malawi is implementing these reforms in close collaboration with trade unions and other interested parties.

Finally, the Malawi Government has fully recognized the important role that the private sector is playing as the engine of economic development. The Government has therefore embarked upon a privatization programme under which Government corporations will be sold on the market, liquidated or integrated into Government ministries. In addition, the Government is undertaking an active investment promotion campaign to attract investors from within and from outside the country.

I wish to assure the Assembly that my delegation has closely followed the deliberations of this session, and we have found the experiences of other delegations very useful. We have also noted the crucial role that the United Nations is currently playing in the strengthening of the public administration systems of Member countries.

The Acting President: I now call on the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany.

Mr. Henze (Germany): Many of the previous speakers have already stressed the importance of effective and efficient public administration for the promotion of a country's development and its prosperity. In the excellent documentation for this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly, crucial aspects have been highlighted.

In the past few days we have been able to discuss the framework to be set by public administrations at all levels in order to achieve economic growth, vitality in the private sector, social development and the safeguarding of the environment.

Public administration has to be based on the rule of law and democracy. Transparency and accountability for all public institutions are essential in order to combat all forms of mismanagement and corruption, and thus to strengthen responsibility and solidarity in civil society.

In addition to our full endorsement of the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union, I would like to share the experiences Germany has had in the past five years, since reunification, in its struggle with the difficult task of reshaping public administration and with an economy in transition that suffered the loss of its major markets in Central and Eastern Europe.

Furthermore, I would also briefly like to introduce the main results of the Regional Conference on the Role of Public Administration in Promoting Economic Reform in Eastern and Central European Countries, which was held in January 1996 in Berlin, in preparation for this session of the General Assembly. Our experiences and those of our neighbour countries were the main reasons for the selection of this particular theme. We welcome the availability of the summary of the Conference report as a United Nations document.

Re-establishing, reorganizing, rebuilding and reshaping public administrations in the new federal States in the eastern part of Germany is an ongoing process. The transition from a centrally planned economy and a centralized public administration with the State directly involved in the production of goods and services, to a fully developed public and private sector is not easy to achieve; it takes time and is expensive.

The lessons learned so far have proved that without supportive and predictable administrative and legal structures at all levels, and without access to public services — particularly to a justice system — the private sector and citizens would live in a state of uncertainty and insecurity, hindering the development of their full potential.

Even more important are democratization and the participation of the people in the decision-making process of making decisions that are of immediate concern to them. Only free and fair elections can set up governments which are accountable to their citizens and committed to their well-being.

The second important element in the reconstruction of the eastern part of Germany has been the restructuring of all sectors of the economy. Privatization became the key to economic development. Since this task would have exceeded the capacities of the Government and its agencies, the Federal Government created the *Treuhandanstalt*, a trust fund charged with selling public companies and finding private buyers and investors, and provided with sufficient resources to assist the privatized companies in their efforts to achieve a sound economic and financial basis.

It is no secret that capacity-building at all levels and in all sectors of society in the eastern part of my country is still supported by a huge amount of public transfer payments, private investments and technical and personnel assistance. It is also true that, besides this resource flow from west to east, an increasing share of resources for investments, wages earned, taxes paid and products produced has been generated within the new Federal States themselves.

The will and ability of a population to shape its future are the prerequisites for success. If it does not mobilize its own resources, transfer payments are almost worthless and fail to have the intended impact.

Those experiences, which I have been able to describe only in very general terms, also became the basis for our cooperation with the countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe. They were also among the reasons we supported the Regional Conference on the Role of Public Administration in Promoting Economic Reform in Eastern and Central European Countries, which took place in Berlin in January 1996. Allow me to give a brief summary of the main findings of that Conference.

There was agreement that reforms would have to cover a very broad range of areas, including civil service structures, the judicial system, tax legislation, management of public expenditures, administration audits, staff policies and training and the definition of the role of the private sector. The need for a diversity of national approaches and the merits of flexible, pragmatic and non-dogmatic policies of deregulation and privatization were emphasized. Participants also agreed that reforms require a long-term strategy, stability, coherence and consistency in the pursuit of change.

It is clear that the State will not wither away. But what is needed is a State with a strong democratic structure. A strong, proactive government is usually helpful, but not necessarily one that is big. It should be a government that can listen and communicate, with a civil service that is responsive and accountable, and whose decision-making processes are transparent and open to public participation and review.

The old "top-down" approaches are slowly being replaced by new patterns which follow the paths of deconcentration, decentralization and de-bureaucratization. Participants in the Conference were aware that drastic adjustments were not without danger, sometimes resulting in dysfunction and improper balances between the various levels of public administration or in brain-drains in the private sector, to name a just a few problems.

It was agreed that basic elements for the proper functioning of the private and public sectors are the establishment and protection of property rights and labour laws, the protection of citizens' rights against bureaucracies and the clear separation of responsibilities between the various levels of government.

The main findings of the Regional Conference in Berlin underline the fact that modernizing and reforming the administrative system of a State is an essential component of the economic, social and political transformation currently taking place in Eastern and Central European countries. Although these changes occurred in countries that are our immediate neighbours and were in many cases radical, we have always been aware of the fact that changes of a similarly radical nature took place in many countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. In a great many of those countries the structural reforms necessary to promote economic and social development were difficult to bring about. They often required sacrifices which affected in particular the low-income groups of the population. But it has also become obvious in those areas that structural reforms must be accompanied by reforms in government and administration.

Germany has cooperated with many developing countries in their efforts to improve public administration. We have learned that such cooperation must take into account the special situation of each country, as well as the established traditions of administrative systems. But one principle has proved to be applicable everywhere: decentralization can greatly enhance the efficient and effective use of human, social and economic resources.

Let me conclude by saying that we are convinced that our deliberations within the United Nations on the relationship between public administration and development will contribute to a better understanding of this complex problem in developing countries and countries in transition, as well as in the context of our joint cooperation for development.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Mehmet Atalay, Deputy Director-General, State Planning Organization of Turkey.

Mr. Atalay (Turkey): It is a privilege for me to address this Assembly on this important occasion. My statement will be distributed in its entirety, but because of time constraints I will limit myself to highlighting the main points.

Turkey has acquired a great deal of expertise and accumulated experience on development planning during the long time span from the 1960s to the 1990s. I would like to underline the fact that Turkey basically followed the indicative planning path. Parallel to transformations in global conditions, and on the basis of a broader understanding, planning in Turkey is increasingly gaining the characteristics of a participatory and consensus-building process, coordinating various economic and social policies.

The seventh five-year development plan, which was adopted by the Turkish Parliament in 1995, and which will cover the period from 1996 to 2000, is a product of these accumulated planning skills. The plan emphasizes policy-oriented, macro-level strategic issues and provides a vision for Turkey at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Turkey is a dynamic developing country which underwent a structural transformation during the 1980s. After the 1980s, Turkey made significant progress towards establishing the principles and bases of an economy open to competition — liberalizing foreign trade, determining prices by market forces and restructuring and developing domestic financial markets. To complement this process, international capital movements were entirely liberalized in 1989. Restructuring efforts in the public sector were also continued in this period.

After 1980, considerable increases were recorded in the growth of gross national product, capacity utilization in the manufacturing industry, the volume of exports, the share of manufacturing industry in exports and the ratio of trade volume to gross national product.

Despite these developments in the 1980s, chronic high inflation, investment deficiencies in the industrial sector and, especially, the problems caused by the failure to realize structural change to enhance competitiveness in the public and private sectors have persisted. In this structural reform process, the need to link development with public administration and to redefine the role of the State have become pivotal issues.

I would like to share some of the views of my delegation on the report of the Secretary-General on public administration and development. The basic idea of the report on the twelfth meeting of the Group of Experts is that public administration and development are inseparable. The United Nations experts underline the changes in global development strategies and the global context which call for a new role for the State. Leadership by public administration and a strong emphasis on the "thinking" part of government are the other basic points of the report. All these points are in conformity with the Turkish perspective.

There is already a strong feeling on the part of the Turkish authorities that in the process of domestic and global changes, Turkey needs to define the role of the State and that of public administration. Privatization, the development of new markets, decentralization and reducing bureaucracy have all been among the priorities of Turkish Governments. These problems constitute an important part of Turkish development plans and annual programmes. The seventh five-year development plan puts a strong emphasis upon policy-oriented macro-level issues and contains 20 major legal and institutional reform projects. Among these reform projects, human resource development occupies a special place. There is also a reform project pertaining to the development of regulatory and supervisory functions of the State. Moreover, public services in general, and judicial and social security services in particular, are targeted as key areas to increase efficiency. Finally, there is a reform project for the strengthening of local administrations.

Turkey's report on its public administration approach in its five-year development plan, covering the period 1996-2000, is available to representatives.

It is clear that there is a global trend towards more participatory and transparent administration at every level of public administration. Decentralization and increasing the flexibility and accountability of the central administration have become pivotal issues. In that context, knowledge is becoming the crucial element for the successful and responsive organization and management of public agencies. In that regard, information technologies and quality staff are two indispensable elements. It is my strong belief that with a successful implementation of the aforementioned reform projects and with a commitment to modern information and management practices, Turkey will enter the twenty-first century in much better shape with respect to the quality of its public administration.

The United Nations Group of Experts has a broader perspective than experts focused on individual countries. I appreciate this macro-level perspective provided by the United Nations reports. However, general ideas are usually ineffective when it comes to implementing a reform programme in a specific country. In that regard, the United Nations should concentrate more on problem countries and try to produce case studies on practical concerns. As a vital part of this research, the United Nations experts should focus on the discovery of country-specific barriers before reform efforts.

It is my view that the United Nations should put more emphasis on country-specific requirements and solutions. In that context, one should emphasize the link between the role of the State and the level of development. This dynamic process requires a careful, context-based analysis so that each country can devise the most appropriate public administration system for its level of development.

As a final point, I would like to stress the importance of retrospective analysis of the United Nations reform efforts. If there is a well-done retrospective analysis, individual countries and United Nations experts alike will be more effective in their programmes. Such retrospective analysis would also shed light on future policies of the United Nations.

I would like to conclude by stressing that the United Nations is and will remain a key Organization in providing a global perspective to individual countries. It has been a pleasure for me to participate in this special United Nations meeting and to interact with my counterparts from all over the world. I am looking forward to seeing the fruits of these meaningful efforts in the very near future.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. Aitmatov (Kyrgyzstan): I would like to reaffirm the great importance the Kyrgyz Government attaches to this resumed session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. This is certainly a remarkable event, marking the first time the General Assembly has met to discuss specifically the question of public administration in development. Evidently, we have come to this stage at a time when the need for a fundamental review of the role of public administration and development is more urgent and apparent than ever.

We have carefully studied the reports of the Secretary-General and the Group of Experts and note gratefully that they draw due attention to the needs of countries with economies in transition. In common with other transition countries, Kyrgyzstan faces a major challenge in improving Government effectiveness across a wide range of functions. Along with adjusting its system of Government to the market-oriented economy and the process of democratization, the Kyrgyz Republic is engaged in building up and strengthening its new public institutions as a newly independent State. The Government is now challenged to implement these changes and, at the same time, to preserve the best features of those existing socio-economic structures which contribute to a stable society. There is a clear awareness among the State authorities that the success of the transition process and the performance of new systems depend on a reorientation and strengthening of management.

The public sector management system in Kyrgyzstan is evolving. Efforts have been made in this respect to combine native historical and political traditions with the experience of other countries channelled through the programmes of international agencies. Several structural reforms have already taken place — in particular, the number of ministries and State agencies has decreased by half.

A special unit within the President's office has been set up to address public sector reform and training. Its cooperation in this area with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the European Union, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is considered to be one of the top priorities of the Government's foreign policy. UNDP, through a management development project, works closely with the European Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) Programme and line ministries to provide public sector management training, addressing immediate needs. The UNDP training is delivered through the Bishkek International Management School in such a way as to create a sustainable institutional capacity in Kyrgyzstan that is responsive to the needs of the people.

Although public sector management policies have already been and continue to be developed, there is still an urgent need for training and retraining civil servants in the field. We should admit that the Government's administration and management system has not kept pace with the changes in the modern life of this society. With the earlier predominance of central planning, many administrators and managers were trained in technical skills, with almost no emphasis on policy analysis, evaluation or modern implementation methods. An important task at hand is that of building staff capacity and creating a modern performance- and people-oriented, professional and effective civil service.

With the central Government of Kyrgyzstan in the capital, provincial and local administration is a responsive form of government that complies with and implements directions from the top. Though there are no definite plans for extensive decentralization at this time, efforts are being made to upgrade the management capacity of the regional staff. This process has been developed locally and has incorporated many useful aspects of management planning.

But there is still a clear need for improved management skills in planning, budgeting, supervising, and coordinating development analysis, economic management and programme and project management at the local level. This could be achieved through the establishment of free extension centres of the Bishkek International Management School in the northern, southern, and central parts of the country. Further assistance for public administration training could be provided by promoting study tours in various countries that correspond to the transitional economic and administrative needs of Kyrgyzstan. These orientation tours for senior management would expose Kyrgyz officials to the countries' public sector management policies, systems, procedures and functions, as well as their distribution of responsibilities, problem-solving methods, performance appraisal systems and techniques. Our officials would be able to establish linkages with their corresponding agencies in other Governments and public sector training institutions.

We believe that the recommended public sector strategic management reviews would help our Government to map out new strategies and develop the appropriate process for establishing national priorities for development. It would be helpful for Kyrgyzstan to have advisory services provided by the United Nations programme in the following areas: information management and computers, financial management and financial institutions, tax policy and administration, government budgeting, accounting and auditing, and development of legislative and judicial systems.

Aid management and coordination are entirely new functions in Kyrgyzstan, and its needs in this field are considerable. The Government has welcomed cost-sharing contributions from the Government of Switzerland and perceives UNDP as the lead agency in this area.

Undoubtedly, natural disasters threaten development processes. Kyrgyzstan is particularly disaster-prone, and development results have been affected by the frequent incidence of disasters. The Kyrgyz Government would be grateful for the opportunity to participate in the global programme for the integration of public administration and the science of disasters.

Finally, I would like to stress that the Kyrgyz Government is fully aware of the fact that capacity-building in the public administrative system will require strengthening institutions so that they can perform better in all respects and at all levels. At the highest level, the administration must be responsive to changes in governing and efficient in anticipating long-term developments and in designing future-oriented strategies.

Since the United Nations now plays a proactive role in assisting Governments, we would like to support the inter-agency working group's recommendation, that all inter-agency programmes in public administration and finance should be coordinated. But the United Nations in particular is a clearing-house for experiences in public administration reform and innovation. Let it facilitate the sharing of experiences between Governments, and between agencies. At the same time, the focus of the United Nations programme should be action-oriented and directed to the practical needs of its Member States.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Algeria.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): In a world subject to ever faster-paced developments and to in-depth transformations of the frameworks and viewpoints that shape and guide State action, our discussions here afford us a useful opportunity to stop and think together about how to clarify concepts and organizational patterns for public service to help Government authorities, with their numerous instruments, carry out effectively and economically their mission of governing in the best interests of the citizenry. Just as other developing countries have done, Algeria has ensured that its public administration has an essential role in the design and execution of its developmental effort.

Ever since its independence, Algeria's principal aim has been the establishment of the institutions that make up a solid State, a State that endures beyond the realm of events and individuals, a State that has been given the weighty task of laying the groundwork for an economic and social machinery geared towards recovering and fully developing the nation's wealth so as to meet the needs of its people.

One must acknowledge the indispensable and positive role played by the State in Algeria. Above and beyond the creation of a dense industrial network, the direct involvement of the State in economic management has made it possible for us to take on the considerable and manifold needs of a population deprived of essentials in the areas of education, health, jobs and housing and to set up an infrastructure even in the remotest corners of our vast territory.

This means the historical pre-eminence of the State in the development process has shaped the current economic and social landscape of our country, which is characterized by a State sector that generates over 60 per cent of our gross domestic product, and is also brought to bear on actions by the authorities relating to the problems of transition to a market economy.

This set of realities has led Algeria, committed as it is to a vast process of economic reform, to formulate and implement a development strategy which, while subjecting the economy to the laws of the marketplace, will ensure the necessary balance between the various State functions, tying the powers of the public authorities in the coordination of economic activity to the desire to preserve to the greatest extent possible a patrimony that has been built up through the colossal efforts of our national community, while encouraging free enterprise and private initiative.

In this context, the State seeks to modernize the kinds of measures taken by its public administration by gradually shifting its management and production actions towards a stronger public administration role in overseeing regulation and the proper functioning of economic mechanisms, in guaranteeing political and social stability and in protecting the most vulnerable sectors of society, in a spirit of social justice and rational solidarity.

Thus, the new set of challenges facing public administration and development involves less a weakening of the State than a refocusing of its mission and of the roles that it will henceforth have to play in different ways, but with the same objective: the promotion of the well-being of all of society. In the new legislative and institutional order of things that Algeria is in the process of setting up so that it can enter the market economy, State action takes the following directions: first, preserving macroeconomic stability and restarting economic growth by means of affirming the State's role in designing and implementing legislation and regulations for economic activity, which in the future is to be sustained by a variety of actors; secondly, achieving national consensus and cohesion within society while playing the role of arbiter to reconcile the interests of the various actors in a future open economy henceforth, in order to prevent the inevitable frustrations born of socio-economic upheaval from leading to social fragmentation and marginalization; and, thirdly, restructuring the presence of the State in the economic arena and its direct involvement in the national economic machinery by determining in which sectors it must remain involved and at what level, and those from which it must disengage, for the benefit of private initiative.

In the light of this experience in Algeria, and that in many other developing countries, we must tread carefully as we look at the question of the role of the State and, more particularly, of public administration in the process of national development. Need we recall in this connection the founding role played by the State in nation-building in certain third world countries, serving as the glue of national cohesion, as it continues to do in many of those countries?

The imperatives of reducing budget deficits and the desire to achieve operational efficiency shared by us all could not possibly be the basis for a universal conclusion favouring the diminishment of the State or the systematic dismantling of public administration at the cost of inviting the disruption of networks that provide structure and sustenance to economic and social life in many developing countries.

In this connection, it is appropriate to take into account the diversity of situations prevailing in each country in economic, social, cultural and political terms to appreciate the effectiveness and efficiency of the administrative apparatus and then perhaps to suggest adjustments, since there cannot be just one analytical criterion or just one model for good administration. Each country must assess its own public administration on the basis of a certain number of parameters specific to it to: its historical heritage, the expectations of its people, its level of development, its social structure, its societal blueprint and so on. Nonetheless, if the risk of bureaucracy is everywhere, we must recognize that in many cases developing countries suffer less from an excess of administration than from a lack of administration. This phenomenon of "under-administration" has grown even worse under the impact of structural adjustment policies, particularly in certain African countries that have at times been compelled to shrink their administrative structures, which adversely affects the capability of public services to fulfil even minimal administrative functions and provide social services to populations, while drastically reducing State action in promoting development.

The recent African regional meeting on public administration and development, held from 25 March to 27 March 1996 in Namibia, on the subject of structural adjustment for greater government efficiency put its finger on this issue inn timely fashion. The view was taken that structural adjustment programmes have hurt the ability of Governments to formulate and implement appropriate development programmes and policies. Among the conclusions of the meeting, it was recommended that the public sector extend beyond merely budgetary considerations and seek instead to strengthen the capability of Governments to meet the expectations and the needs of the governed.

From this perspective, we appreciate the observations made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his opening remarks as we began our work here on the priority to be given to strengthening the capability of Governments to play their roles and to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. In this context, the Secretary-General pointed out the services the United Nations can offer the Member States, particularly developing countries, in this area.

Strengthened by the confidence of its Member States, which is based on its neutrality and impartiality of its actions, the United Nations and its various institutions can indeed play a significant role in improving public administration performance in developing countries. In fulfilling the various mandates assigned to it since its creation, the United Nations has striven to meet the needs expressed by the Member States, and we take pleasure in noting in this connection the account contained in the report submitted by the Secretary-General for this resumed session. It is important that this United Nations effort be pursued, strengthened and be adapted to the new needs arising from the spectacular political and economic changes of this day and age.

The key areas of our Organization's action were outlined by the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance at their twelfth meeting. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the funds, the programmes and most especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have already adopted their organizational structures to take these new needs into account, through the creation, first, of the Department for Development Support and Management Services and, secondly, through the adoption of a programme to promote administration and finances in the context of the United Nations medium-term plan for the period 1992-1996. These structures and the opportunities for assistance they afford should be better known to those Member States that could resort to their services.

It is thus to be hoped that this resumed session will contribute to synchronizing all initiatives taken within and outside the United Nations system and will stimulate fresh measures to help developing countries establish the kind of public administration that will meet expectations in terms of performance, fairness, efficiency, transparency and will be a positive force for the governed.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Belarus.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): First, allow me to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his detailed and comprehensive report (A/50/847) on the question of public administration and development. It must be acknowledged that the subject chosen for discussion in this resumed session of the General Assembly is a topical one, a source of great interest today for politicians, public officials, businessmen, scientists and representatives of a broad sector of society.

Public administration has for centuries played a key role in the comprehensive development of society, and to a great extent its main functions in the State have not changed. It acts, first, as a conduit for relations between employers and workers; secondly, it creates conditions for the effective functioning of all aspects of the economy; and, thirdly, it creates a legislative and normative base, to regulate all spheres of society's activities. Thus, the State has real tools for shaping the development of society as a whole.

Of course, all countries, large and small, have their own traditions and invaluable experience in public administration. Credit should go to the organizers of this session for convening such a representative forum to exchange experience and achievements in the area of public administration and to determine the future role of the United Nations in this sphere.

The Government of Belarus has set itself the task of carrying out economic reforms to move from a planned economy to a socially oriented market economy. It would be no exaggeration to say that during the period of transition to established market relations and integration in the world economic system, the effectiveness of public administration is one of the key factors in successful reform in my country as a whole. This is why we attach such great importance to participation in the work of this resumed session.

Today in my country, reform of the public administration system is being carried out in the following ways: the adoption of economic means of stimulating production and business activities; the restructuring of the national economic sector, with emphasis on leading edge and high technology sectors; reform of the banking sector; the creation of conditions for stimulating long-term capital investment and for attracting direct foreign investment to modernize industrial enterprises and to create competitive new market structures; reform of the system of social protection for citizens; and so on.

Over the last two years these measures have already made it possible to achieve certain positive results. In particular, the stringent monetary and fiscal policies being pursued in the Republic, together with support from entrepreneurs, has made it possible to lower the level of inflation from 30 per cent to 40 per cent a month to 3 per cent to 4 per cent at the start of this year. It is possible to talk about controlling inflation through economic methods. Its reduction, together with other measures, has made it possible to halt a loss of value in revolving funds, had a positive impact on the economy and reduced interest rates for credit. Export enterprises have figured actively in this, and total exports of the Republic increased in 1995 compared with 1994 by more than 70 per cent, reaching $4 billion.

For the first time in the last few years there has been a halt to the catastrophic drop in the population's real salaries and real monetary income. Growth rates in salaries and the consumer price index of 1995, in comparison with 1994, stood at 94.4 per cent. According to government predictions of socio-economic development of the Republic for 1996, the gross domestic product will be R 178 trillion to R 180 trillion, which is 100 per cent to 101 per cent of the 1995 figure. The average monthly rate of inflation should stand at about 2.5 per cent. Gross agricultural production is expected to increase by 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent. Total exports in 1996 will increase by 8.5 per cent.

In carrying out its tasks, the Government of the Republic of Belarus is experiencing serious difficulties, chiefly due to the huge shortage of qualified management personnel with a knowledge of leading technology and approaches to State administration in a market economy. Another destabilizing factor is the brain-drain of qualified people, particularly of public officials, to the private sector. Strengthening the potential of State administration is therefore a priority for Belarus in international technical cooperation. Expert advice is that about 30 per cent of the needs of the Republic can be met in this area — personnel training, transfer of high technology, management. In this connection, we should note the positive experience of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the use of the system of national projects for technical assistance, which makes it possible to train national experts and management personnel to meet international standards.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe also made a great contribution by giving consultative and advisory assistance on a broad range of questions to countries in transition. In particular, it has given us a great deal of help in modernizing the energy sector and improving national transport policy. We must also note the long-term and effective cooperation of Belarus with the International Labour Organisation, which regularly sends specialists to Minsk to advise on improving Belarus labour legislation and bringing it into line with the requirements of market and production relations.

We are developing a useful interaction with international financial groups and the World Bank. As a result, over the last two years the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made a contribution of more than $270 million in the form of two long-term loans, and there have also been loans from the World Bank amounting to $170 million. In addition, the Belarus Government is working on a programme of measures to lead the economy out of a crisis, and that programme has been provisionally agreed to by the IMF.

The programme provides for a broad range of measures, whose implementation is already yielding positive results. In the second half of the year we have seen a significant reduction in the level of inflation. In the area of taxation and budget policy, there have been indications that the budget deficit may be eliminated; it is forecast to fall from a level of 3.2 per cent in 1995 to 2.6 per cent. Following the recommendations of the IMF, the Government of Belarus has pursued a gradual increase in compensation payments for housing and communal services, and we are working together for a mechanism for social protection.

We hope that successful cooperation with bodies of the United Nations system to improve public administration, in order to ensure stable economic development and a speedy transitional period by the States of Central and Eastern Europe, will continue and intensify.

We believe that the General Assembly could help to disseminate the positive experience of organizations giving technical assistance to countries in transition to improve and develop public administration — not just specialized agencies in the United Nations system concerned with the economic area. We are sure that this session will make it possible to find additional resources in the United Nations for this matter. I am confident that this session will make a substantial contribution to the search for new ways to enhance the efficiency of public administration and development for all Member States.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Diallo Amadou Ousmane, Adviser on Organization and Management of Public Administration to the Prime Minister of Mauritania.

Mr. Ousmane (Mauritania) (*interpretation from French*): I wish first to thank the United Nations for having resumed the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to consider the question of public administration and development, a subject of great concern to our Organization, since administration and development are closely linked to the lives of people.

Public administration in Mauritania, as in most developing countries, was confronted after its independence with the need to build a national State. We had to organize civil society rapidly and put in place the appropriate structures to deal with the burdens assumed by the State in order to establish national sovereignty and ensure public order and the security of persons and property.

Due to a lack of national capital and the virtual non-existence of private savings, we then had to take hold of the key sectors of the economy by establishing new financial, trade and production institutions.

As the chief employer and decision maker on economic activity and the instrument for the redistribution of wealth and the fruits of development, the State thus found itself the chief engine of development, assuming both the functions of public authority and of production.

This involvement of the State in production activities, together with other factors — particularly the drought of the 1970s, the collapse of the mining sector and the deterioration of terms of trade — led the country into serious economic difficulties.

By way of responding to this situation, since 1985 the Government has set up, with the help of our development partners, a vast programme of structural adjustment that is now being pursued in economic policies for the period of 1992-1996.

In this context, in order to achieve the goal of ending the State's involvement, the adjustment was supported by a policy of decentralization and of institutional development focused on modernizing administration and the establishment of a pluralistic democracy.

The dynamics of the adjustment begun in 1985 se before Mauritania the problem of redefining the role of the State, an essential question in the debate on public administration and development, which is the subject of this session.

Our experience in Mauritania is based on the conviction that the firm establishment of democracy in developing countries is a need that is met through a deep-going renovation of the State. We believe that there can be no democracy without a state of law, nor a state of law without an administration that is imbued with a sense of public service, values the role of citizens and is attentive to their expectations.

Thus, the State, while consolidating its traditional role as public authority, will, in its task of regulating and managing economic activity, have to develop new areas of partnership with economic agents and basic development agents — local collectives, businesses and other members of civil society. This means that the State must adapt itself to the needs of a development process in which the citizen is an actor or, better yet, a partner.

In line with these ideas and with the plan set out by His Excellency Mr. Maaouya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, President of Mauritania, we launched a new policy of disengaging the State from the production sector. This was done by setting up a code of investment incentives and a programme for privatizing State companies and improving public enterprises. We then proceeded to liberalize trade and exchange.

The institutional apparatus was reorganized in various ways. The renewed decentralization at the level of urban and rural communes — a total of 208 in the entire national territory — formed the framework for basic development. A new Constitution was approved by plebiscite in 1991. Authorized political parties, a pluralistic press and a bicameral legislature became operational. The main decision-making centres were strengthened by giving them the instruments for planning, programming, following up and monitoring governmental actions.

A new management policy for State personnel was designed and implemented. This new policy is aimed at managing public service personnel and monitoring the payroll. It establishes transparency in recruitment through competition based on common law, and professional training as a way of maximizing human resources, and merit-based rewards as a fair system of incentives.

The reorganization of the institutional apparatus has also addressed financial management, which is being strengthened through the reorganization of the structures in the Ministry of Finance, in particular the customs, taxation and public debt sectors. At the technical and decision-making levels, public authorities and private sector managers are coordinating their activities.

The social policies put in place have made it possible to raise the rate of school attendance in basic education to over 76 per cent, while improving the quality of education, ensuring health care coverage and primary health care and promoting the affordability of pharmaceutical products for persons of modest means.

A broad programme is being implemented for the protection of children and their mothers. Electricity and communications are progressively being made available to populations in both urban and rural areas. Networks of roads and ports are being constructed and/or renovated. A national environmental council has been created; national non-governmental organizations have been authorized, and some of them have become operational. Lastly, a national environment fund is being created.

Mauritania continues to step up its efforts to develop an administration for development. This is why we welcome the growing interest the international community has been giving to developing countries, the Maastricht conference on Africa and the special initiative of the current session of the General Assembly devoted to a topic that lies at the heart of our concerns.

This concerted interest in public administration and its role in development will make it possible for us to achieve better coordination with the actions of our development partners. This attention will certainly yield better results if the mobilization of resources makes it possible to improve the absorption capacities of our countries, and this improvement will come through a better identification and organization of our needs and through the strengthening of our capacities to develop, implement and assess our development programmes. In this respect, the private sector must be involved in the process of formulating, following up and evaluating development policies and programmes.

Cooperation should be established between the public and private sectors to harness and utilize the flow of information.

Technical assistance should play a supporting role in the implementation of programmes through an effective transfer of competence and know-how, thus enhancing national expertise, which is a key element in the task of stewarding development.

We shall strengthen our capacity by increasing managerial training measures, through strengthened programmes at civil service training institutions. In this context, we envisage opening training schools for civil servants in the private sector and having civil servants spend time working in private enterprise; conversely, private sector workers will spend time in public administration and training schools to gain an insight into the culture of public service and current regulations and procedures. Furthermore, the major State training schools and their counterparts in the private sector will be able to provide management training for the public and private sectors.

With regard to partnership, the State could call on private enterprise to finance or co-finance, manage or co-manage, public projects and services. It could also transfer the management of public services to local administrative bodies, such as non-governmental organizations, associations or agencies, or to local districts, taking account of specific local circumstances and factors.

Regional cooperation, promoting the pooling of resources and the search for appropriate solutions, would respond to the challenges of sustainable development.

Before concluding, I would like to make a positive contribution to this fiftieth session of the General Assembly by commending the adoption of a resolution by which the Assembly does two things. First, we recognize the important role of public administration in development and commit Member States to including reform of public adminstration in their national development plans and to placing national structures dealing with the reform of the civil service at a sufficiently high governmental level to enable them to act more effectively and carry out the desired changes.

Secondly, we aim to take advantage of the potential for personnel training, study and expertise offered by national and inter-community bodies such as the *Institut international d'administration publique (IIAP)*, the *Ecoles Nationales d'administration (ENA)*, the *Observatoire des Functions Publiques Africaines (OFPA)*, and the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), and the competent organs of the United Nations system and the World Bank, making them the framework for technical and financial assistance to meet the needs clearly defined by States, in accordance with the necessary development of national expertise.

The Acting President: I call on Mr. Vianney Shumbusho, Director of the Office of the Minister of Public Administration of Rwanda.

Mr. Shumbusho (Rwanda): On behalf of the Government and people of Rwanda, I am grateful for this opportunity to share our experience of rebuilding our public administration after this century's brutal genocide.

I would like to reiterate the comments of previous speakers, that good governance brought about by effective and efficient public administration is a *conditio sine qua non* for the development of any country.

The history of Rwanda has been characterized by internal conflicts, which culminated in the recent war and the catastrophic genocide of 1994. The immediate consequences of this were the destruction of approximately one seventh of the population, the majority of whom were in the productive labour force; the destruction of infrastructure and equipment, both public and private; the collapse of institutions, including the civil service, judiciary and local administration, to mention but a few; a severe setback in economic activity, particularly agriculture and industrial activities; the exodus of between 1 million and 2 million people to neighbouring countries as refugees; a spontaneous and demanding inflow of former refugees from neighbouring countries; and a surviving population which was visibly incapacitated, traumatized, demoralized and de-motivated.

Amid all these problems, the Government of National Unity installed on 19 July 1994 was faced with the daunting challenge of rehabilitating and rebuilding a war-ravaged economy, reviving the provision of basic social services to a traumatized population, coping with the wreckage of genocide, stabilizing a fragile political alliance, and consolidating internal peace and security, as well as warding off looming military threats from exiled soldiers of the former regime.

On the other hand, the Government was faced with crippling obstacles, in the form of a treasury that had been emptied and swept clean by the ousted regime; the threat from regrouped elements of the defeated army of the former regime; a completely decimated public service; and interference by hostile foreign Governments associated with the defeated former regime.

The new regime, armed with courage, hope and commitment, has embarked on rebuilding the public service. The initial phase of this reconstruction in the public service has been characterized by emergency, ad hoc responses to the crises of post-genocide administration. Fortunately, we believe that the emergency phase is now approaching its end. It is time to reflect, rebuild, reshape and redirect the public service to meet the challenge of the next phase of rebuilding the nation. This is the central theme of this statement on public administration and development.

I should like to refer first to the problems of the current public service. At the end of the recent war, the former regime fled the country. The political elite, its army and the bulk of the civil servants took off. Having planned, executed and participated in the genocide, they feared facing the consequences of their heinous actions, and fled to neighbouring countries. They also persuaded a large segment of the peasantry to flee with them.

As a consequence, Rwanda has an entirely new civil service work force. While it was relatively easy to fill the lower levels of the public service, the middle and senior levels were difficult to fill. The recruitment was ad hoc, and as a result there is now an imbalance in the different levels. The bottom is bulging because of the overemployment of unskilled staff. The middle level, for professional and technical personnel, is understaffed. The senior levels of directors have recently recruited staff with the required education but without adequate managerial experience.

The emerging public service is made up of civil servants with diverse backgrounds who acquired their skills in neighbouring countries during the diaspora. In the long run, the blending of these diverse backgrounds will produce a public service enriched by cross-pollination. In the short term, there is a need to harmonize and manage the differences. Some of the civil servants who have been recruited have the necessary educational background and management experience. Some have the educational qualifications but no managerial experience. Some are steeped in the Anglophile tradition, while others are a product of the francophone tradition derived from the Belgian colonization and from post-independence French influences.

The inherited public service practices are rooted in patrimonialism. Past regimes accepted and encouraged systems of recruitment, promotion and transfer of public servants on the basis of personal, political and kinship criteria. Ministers appointed staff in the public service, and if Ministers changed, public servants also changed.

This system ensured loyalty to the Ministers, but not competence to render services cost effectively. When the new Government came in, it attempted to introduce a system of public service recruitment based on merit. This meant the appointment of public officers based on competence measured in terms of specific qualifications and experience.

The old system had not required the establishment of specific posts for the performance of particular tasks. The new system, based on merit, requires that job specifications be determined, which in turn requires certain qualifications and experience. It is to be expected and normal that there should be tension between old wine and new wine, between the legacy of recruitment based on kinship and recruitment based on merit and professionalism.

The three problems faced by the public service which I have identified — massive flight of public service personnel; the need to blend the experiences of new civil servants; and the tension between the old system of political recruitment and the new standards of merit recruitment — can be said to be unique to Rwanda.

Most African public services have experienced a brain drain, but not on the scale experienced in Rwanda; most African public services cope with the absorption of returning exiles, but not on the scale being witnessed in Rwanda; and most African public services have to deal with kinship influences on recruitment, but, unlike in Rwanda, merit is an entrenched standard.

The Rwandan public service has some other problems, which are generic to the African public service; they are common features of most African public services. I refer to a large and unwieldy structure; extremely low salaries and wages; and low levels of productivity in the public service. While these features may be tolerated by the old regimes that produced them, new regimes with a mandate to rehabilitate, rebuild and develop soon realize that the inherited public service is a blunt tool incapable of being used to achieve their objectives.

If the ambitious rehabilitation and development programmes of the Rwandan Government are to be achieved, it is imperative to reshape public service and transform it into a reliable weapon in the fight against poverty, disease and ignorance. If the current public service is to be transformed in the right way, it is essential to understand its weaknesses and to construct a vision of the future public service: that is, to replace it. If this vision of the future public service is properly articulated, performance in public service will be enhanced.

A vision of our future public service is simple and clear. If it is to guide behaviour it should stand out and shine like the stars on the horizon that guided the three wise men. The review of the current public service points to six stars in the vision of the future public service, as follows.

First, the Rwandan public service should be small, cost-effective and rational. Secondly, it should be driven by clearly articulated missions and objectives. Thirdly, appointments within the Rwandan civil service will take cognizance of past discrimination against women in Rwandan society and will aim to promote appropriately qualified women at all levels of the public sector. Fourthly, appointments to the Rwandan public service will be made on a meritocratic basis, without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, religion or other identity. The public service will provide adequate pay and compensation to highly motivated and competent workers. They will be creative, and innovative problem-solvers. Fifthly, the Rwandan public service should be imbued with an ethic of service to the people, to aim to eradicate poverty, promote social welfare and democratization and raise standards of living. It should be customer-driven, flexible and decentralized, to maximize responsiveness to the needs of the people. Sixthly, all activities of the Rwandan public service should be carried out in a transparent manner and should be accountable to democratic structures, and ultimately to the people of Rwanda. It should be neutral and impartial and should serve the Government of the day with diligence and without regard to political or other allegiances.

We have identified a 10-point plan to reform and reshape the public service and to direct it towards the vision of a highly motivated, productive, responsive and accountable service. The measures proposed are: rehabilitating training centres; designing and conducting training programmes; retooling and re-equipping at the minimum level; designing staff welfare programmes; revising the Public Service Statute; rationalizing public service structures and functions; modernizing personnel records and information systems; designing salaries and wages; introducing results-oriented management; and training women managers and increasing the participation of women in management.

Apart from restructuring the public service, the Government of National Unity has been busy consolidating national security, identifying the agents of genocide and resettling its dislocated and displaced persons. It should be realized that the ghosts of genocide are hanging over Rwanda like a fog. Unless this fog is cleared, the vision to solve the issues of development will remain blurred. A large number of those suspected of genocide are being held in jails originally intended for a smaller number. The institutional machinery for dispensing justice was destroyed during the war. The International Tribunal set up to identify agents of genocide living abroad has not been effective, as it has been crippled by organizational, financial and operational obstacles.

In spite of all the problems, the Rwandan judicial system is being rehabilitated. In order to hasten the judicial process, a Bill was recently presented to Parliament which divided suspected agents of genocide into four categories. Those who masterminded the genocide will get a death sentence, whereas the poor peasants who were led to kill their neighbours will walk off with lighter sentences, provided they show remorse for their heinous crimes.

My Government would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the international community who are assisting it to rehabilitate its judicial system, as well as those arresting suspected agents of genocide who fled to their countries — for example, Cameroon and Zambia.

The return of all refugees has been and still is the primary objective of the Government. Top government leaders, including the Prime Minister, have visited refugee camps in neighbouring countries to reassure refugees that all is well back home, that their security will be guaranteed and that they will be able to repossess their property. Some jobs in the civil service have even been reserved for the returning refugees. These efforts are, however, being sabotaged by the former leaders, most of whom are suspected of committing the genocide.

In conclusion, I want to say that the Ministry of Public Service, which is responsible for spearheading the innovation and strengthening the country's public administration, has always tried its best to live up to its mandate since the war and the genocide. While effective public administration is an essential instrument for managing the post-war Rwanda, the administrative machinery has been the major victim of the traumatic events of 1994.

There is thus a need to restore and strengthen public administration capacities to ensure a civil service that is responsible to the needs of the people and provides quality service. Rwanda's public service needs to be efficient, competent and responsible to the Rwandese people and should support sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

The efforts being made by our country in this direction are not enough by themselves; hence the importance of international cooperation in supporting our own efforts in capacity-building in public administration for development.

The activities undertaken within the framework of the United Nations programme in public administration for enhancing the efficiency of our country's civil service are very important. Since the internal capacity of our public sector has been a casualty of war and genocide, external assistance is a necessity, and we call upon the United Nations system to redouble its efforts in providing this assistance.

The Acting President: I call on Mr. Imre Verebelyi, Government Commissioner for Public Administration of Hungary.

Mr. Verebelyi (Hungary): It is a great pleasure for me to be able to attend this resumed session of the General Assembly to share our experiences in the field of public administration and development.

As the Assembly knows, Hungary is a European country with a system in transition. During the past half decade our public administration served when there was a radical change of regimes. The radical change in 1989 and 1990 from the former centralized, one-party system was an administrative revolution rather than a simple administrative reform. This revolution focused on the changes in the basic functions, role and structure of public administration. The institutional side of public administration was underlined and emphasized, while the operational side was pushed into the background. We developed the basic framework of the legal and democratic State, but sometimes we forgot the operational and managerial side of public administration.

During the change of regime, in the so-called administrative revolution, Hungary became the first among those countries in Central and Eastern Europe facing similar historic challenges to establish a new type of local and central public administration and government, which received its legitimacy from democratic elections. The new system of central government and local self-government appropriately supported the fast development of the bases of the market economy and the rule of law. However, experience of the operation of the new system over the past five years has revealed several deficiencies which will have to be corrected sooner or later.

One of the main deficiencies is that the basic framework of the new system was not developed with precision, as a result of Hungary's lack of experience and time for preparation. Within the new framework, a detailed revision of the tasks of the State and local government has not been completed. Insufficient attention has been paid to simplifying administrative procedures, improving the efficiency of administration, reducing bureaucratic procedures and strengthening control mechanisms.

The quality of administrative work has not been improved, because experts with the highest skills have left the civil service and little attention has been paid to the training of remaining personnel and new civil servants. In order to correct these deficiencies and to prepare for the new tasks of the new century, the Hungarian Government has started an overall administrative reform which defines long-term objectives and sets goals for the short run as well.

After carrying out the tasks of the administrative revolution in Hungary, we are now preparing a reform of public administration, focusing mainly on the managerial aspects. New emphasis is placed on such managerial questions as simplification, reducing bureaucracy and entering the marketplace, as well as result-oriented and performance-evaluated public management.

I should like to underline that strengthening the managerial side of public administration does not mean neglecting either the legal or the democratic aspects, which are very important too. It seems to me that some overseas writers sometimes overemphasize and exaggerate the managerial side of public administration, while some European writers exaggerate the legal and democratic sides. Hungary's opinion is that all three aspects of public administration — the managerial, legal and democratic — are very important and can be harmonized.

As regards the long-term objectives of the Hungarian reform, public administration should be reduced, while its effectiveness and quality are strengthened to be able to complete social and economic missions successfully. To be effective, public administration should achieve the required results at the lowest possible cost, instead of operating for its own bureaucratic purposes. High quality can be secured if skilled and reliable civil servants can meet not only the professional requirements, but also the demands of democratically changing politicians and the needs of the clients of administration as well.

In the first phase of the Hungarian reform, public administration should be reduced according to the different sectoral needs. We prefer a differentiated reduction. This means generally reducing administrative tasks, organization and personnel, while increasing them where this is reasonable and necessary. So both reductions and increases are needed in Hungary.

Processes for integrating and coordinating organizations should be completed; in Hungary necessary functions, especially the control functions of the Government, should be strengthened in the future. The first steps towards improving effectiveness and quality of public administration should be taken. This will require the well-organized training and education of civil servants, preparing them for crisis management and European integration.

The long-term and short-term objectives of Hungarian reform can be reached by several different methods. I should like to mention only two types: administrative methods and market-economy methods.

Administrative methods include revision and reduction of programmes and personnel; deregulation and regulatory reform; decentralization, deconcentration and centralization together, not alone or against each other; coordination and integration of administrative organizations; and better organization of administrative work and information systems.

The market-economy solutions and methods which are used in the private sector, and which can be adopted within the public administration, should also be used as additional and supporting methods. These market-type mechanisms are not the main means of reforming public administration, but only support it. They include cost-benefit analysis, contracting out, privatization, concessions and wider use of service charges and so on.

The draft of the wide-ranging preparations for the reform of the Hungarian public administration is being discussed by interested organizations of the public administration, professional and academic institutions and administrative experts. Multi-party discussions are also taking place regarding the long-term consequences and importance of administrative reform. If we are to have stable administrative reform, we must organize a multi-party consensus, covering not only the current Government, but of Governments over a longer period.

Hungary shares the views expressed by the overwhelming majority of delegates, and we are in broad agreement with the recommendations put forward. My delegation fully agrees with the draft resolution, mainly because it contains timely and well-balanced proposals, many of which are also in concord with the major trend of Hungary's 21 own reform programme proposals.

I will not read out those 21 proposals now, as they will be made available tomorrow morning.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Malta.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): Malta welcomes this resumed session to discuss the item of public administration in development. This meeting underlines the important role that public administrations play in promoting economic growth and sustainable development. Efficiency in the public administrative and financial management capacities ensures a civil service that effectively responds to the achievement of the broader social goals and the individual needs of our citizens.

Malta also welcomes the consolidated report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847); the report of the Group of Experts (A/50/525); the outcome of regional meetings in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Europe; and the 1994 Tangier Declaration of the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of the Civil Service, which gave impetus for the holding of this session.

Unprecedented global, political, economic and technological change has had a wide-ranging impact on the international community as a whole and on each of our societies and their peoples. Public administration is not immune to this process, nor should it be alien to it.

Though there may be characteristics which are specific to the national communities within which we operate, there are undoubtedly numerous other issues, problems and concerns which we share.

Within this context, the United Nations role as a clearing-house and service-oriented catalyst assisting Governments in improving their public management capacities to generate and disseminate global information and experience is pivotal. The contributions of the United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services are commendable, as is its programme emphasizing the four essential components of public sector management: governance and administrative capacity; public finance and resource mobilization; management of the development programmes under national execution; and the partnership between public and private sectors.

Addressing Malta's Public Service Senior Management Conference earlier this year, my Prime Minister, Dr. Edward Fenech Adami, underlined the importance which the Malta Government continues to attach to the public service reform launched in 1987 and successfully implemented since.

In view of your appeals for shorter interventions, Mr. President, we are making available to delegations a paper on the public service reform in Malta, which forms an integral part of our statement and which we request to be included in the records of this resumed session.

I will only briefly outline here the common experience which we share with other States — namely, the different phases of transition to which our public service has had to adjust over the years.

Malta's public service played a key role in Malta's transition from colony to statehood after the attainment of independence on 21 September 1964. Though a service designed for a different society and limited to the specific areas assigned by the colonial administration, Malta's public service gave its contribution to the development of the new State by providing continuity in certain vital domestic sectors and in the setting up of new services, including that of foreign affairs.

More importantly, and pertinent to our theme today, is the enthusiasm with which the public service responded to the challenge of converting Malta's economy from one based on the presence of the military base to one based on industry, tourism, commercial ship repair and agriculture. This phase of economic change was accompanied by reform in other sectors. In most instances the public service found itself being instrumental in the execution of reform policies and a subject itself of the impact which these reforms had on Maltese society as a whole.

Thus the creation of career opportunities in the new economic sectors brought about a change in the perception with which a career in the public service was viewed. Equally, reform, investment and the opening of new opportunities in secondary, technical and tertiary education began to have an impact on the quality of human resources available to the service. During this time certain reform programmes were also introduced into the service. However, these reforms concentrated primarily on pay, grading and classification, and conditions of service. In hindsight, it is evident that they were lacking in the vital sphere of institution-building, a need which was then less evident.

The second phase in Malta's post-independence development saw a growth in Government's direct intervention in the economy with the setting up of a number of parastatal industries and an intensification of regulation. Both of these developments had an impact on the public service, both with regard to the widened powers entrusted to the public service and the impact which an increased Government share in the economy had on opportunities in the private sector. These factors, coupled with other factors of institutional and social stress, increased pressure on the public service and influenced its capacities.

With the change in Administration in 1987, the present Government instituted a broad programme of political, social and economic reform based on the principles of reconciliation, solidarity and subsidiarity, and accession to the European Union. It is within this context that one has to view the current reform programme, which recognizes the public service as a separate, albeit subordinate, institution of the State, with its own ethic of service, sense of professional identity and unambiguous vision of its role in the Maltese polity.

Ineffective control and accountability mechanisms, constant criticism, insufficient management development and an exodus of the best staff to the private sector had left the civil service neglected and demoralized. In early 1988 the Government established the Public Services Reform Commission and the Operations Review, which were mandated to review the public service and propose methods for its renewal and regeneration.

Four major impact areas were identified: the public service as an institution within the governance of Malta, and not as a group in isolation; building on the existing strengths of the service and restoring its institutional fabric; institutionalizing the process of change; and institutionalizing leadership, its renewal and its development and effective exercise.

The objectives set out in the reform agenda were inseparable and were recognized as such. Progress towards the attainment of each depended on progress towards the attainment of the others. Implementation could not be piecemeal. It had to be a holistic approach which took into account the broad reforms in economic and social decentralization, the development of new service sectors and increased access to tertiary education.

Many of the initiatives undertaken underline the scale and magnitude of the task embarked upon and are common to the experience which other States share with us. These included the rethinking of existing organizational structures and the introduction of role delineation; the revision of existing legislation and the introduction of new legislation to reflect subsidiarity; the introduction of an information technology infrastructure; sustained development initiatives in management of change and business re-engineering; the setting up of local Government to enhance citizen empowerment; the revamping of human resources practices and procedures; the new salary structure, which reduced 96 pay scales to 20; and the introduction of a code of ethics for all public officers.

The profile given to the reform initiative created high expectations amongst public officers, constituted bodies, the business community and the citizens at large. Reform results were expected to come within a relatively short span of time, generating tremendous pressure for instant delivery. This process must necessarily be viewed as evolutionary, not instant, particularly since these change initiatives are all taking place alongside the ordinary administrative running of the public sector and not independently of it.

Redirecting human effort is a key factor during the transition from the old to the new. Managing behavioural issues became one of the more complex challenges. There is no easy way to reform. Change invariably involves a review of established values and ways. Inevitably, resistance is encountered. The precarious balancing act of maintaining momentum for change on this scale whilst simultaneously dealing with the management and day-to-day administration of the organization may prove to be the greatest challenge of all.

Together with the public service in the rest of the international community, our public service is already facing the formidable challenges of the revolution in communications and information technology. Government has made massive investment both in providing the necessary infrastructure and in the provision of training. In this instance the major obstacle to be overcome could be that of mentalities adjusting to future shock.

Motivation, partnership and achievement are the driving forces of reform, both within States and amongst the public services of the Member States of the United Nations.

This generation of public service has been exposed more than any of its predecessors to close cooperation between the services. This development is brought about not only by the globalization of the economy and the revolution in communications, but also by the closer association between States in coordinating their policies to achieve global targets ranging from the eradication of certain diseases to ensuring adequate nourishment for infants and children; from combating international drug trafficking to controlling the flow of armaments; and from a unification of statistics and standards to the promotion of world peace.

In all these diverse areas, our public services must cooperate. My country has actively involved itself in these and other areas of international cooperation. In the process of accession to the European Union we are involved in structured dialogue in different sectors. In our association with Commonwealth members, we are sharing not only the heritage of a common past but also the challenges of the future. In this respect, Malta is honoured to be hosting the 1996 Biennial Conference of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, later this month.

My Government views these initiatives in the same spirit as that in which it views its efforts at reform within the public service at home: a spirit nurtured by a renewed will to revamp and consolidate the notion of service; a spirit inspired by a vision of a better world for future generations as we approach the year 2000.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.111

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

111th plenary meeting
Thursday, 18 April 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tejerina (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting (A/50/525)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/926)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.69)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): This morning the Assembly will continue its plenary meetings devoted to public administration and development.

I call on His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Abu Oaf, State Minister of Labour and Administrative Reform of Sudan.

Mr. Abu Oaf (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): For the first time, the General Assembly is meeting on a special basis to take up, for the first time, the question of public administration and development. We consider it our duty to commend this positive initiative, since it addresses fundamental questions relating to public administration and its relationship to sustainable development.

In this context, I wish to express, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his detailed report on public administration and development, contained in document A/50/847. I also wish to thank and commend the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance for the report on its twelfth meeting. I join other speakers in expressing appreciation for the valuable input of the Department for Development Support and Management Services and of all other organs operating in the area of public administration and development, particularly the specialized organs within the United Nations system.

The Sudan is undergoing fundamental changes in economic philosophy and sound governance. This requires effective political will and the support of a technical administration that is capable of developing its mechanisms and operational procedures in response to changes at the national and international levels.

Constitutional changes, and the move towards constitutional legality, are among the most important changes at the national level. Perhaps the most salient features of the coming period will be transparency and accountability in public administration and governance. Sudan's most important reforms in this area will include

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

those pertaining to the philosophy of Government, which will be represented in grass-roots participation and self-reliance; and measures to allow market economics and mechanisms to function without harming the interests of vulnerable groups, to ensure social justice and to protect the social fabric of the community.

This new orientation, inspired by changes in the philosophy guiding government and economic management in the Sudan, requires changes in the functions of public administration and in the quality of the manpower needed to perform these functions in a businesslike manner and with the required flexibility. This will have an impact on policies and on the selection processes for public service, and will also require the establishment of rules and regulations governing promotion, training and retraining, in order to guide the process of change and development at all levels and in all spheres.

Job classification is an important aspect of the reform of public administration, and it comes into play in human resources planning and deployment and in determining policies for education, counselling and training. It should also help in job performance evaluation and in determining the skills and professional experience required. I wish to refer in this context to the international dimension of this issue — the impact of international developments, the globalization of the economy, large economic blocs, the freeing of international trade and the accumulation of foreign debt by States with limited incomes.

All these factors have implications for the performance of the national economy and government machinery in the areas of development and investment, and for the policies and plans required to adapt and develop the role of the national administration in accordance with the latest changes, maximize benefits and minimize adverse side effects.

In response to the issues I have outlined, Sudan has taken concrete steps in specific areas in line with available and potential national resources. I would like briefly to refer to the steps taken. In the context of policy development and the reform of administrative structures and the civil service, the Government has reorganized executive organs at the provincial and national levels in line with constitutional changes. Such changes, which affect government policy, are based on the concept of citizens' participation at the levels of local communities, national coalitions and local councils, so that people can administer their own affairs. Coordination organs have also been established, in addition to performance evaluation mechanisms at all levels of government. The Government has also shown a great interest in national training agencies to enhance the efficiency of workers.

In the area of improving the performance of the public sector, the Government has adopted a comprehensive national strategy, along with appropriate policies and programmes. We have established an ambitious programme to review the performance of various government organizations. The Government has also introduced a privatization policy and taken steps to downsize the civil service by eliminating surplus manpower in order to rationalize human resources and minimize civil service costs.

The Government has also taken steps to establish a national database to improve national administration in all ministries and government units. This will come under the umbrella of the manpower Ministry, which is in charge of human resources development, public service and employment.

The Government has implemented a reform programme for financial administration, and steps have been taken to reform tax administration and to encourage investment. The Government has also covered much ground in privatizing public sector enterprises and in conducting performance reviews to improve their effectiveness.

With regard to social development, the Government has established a Ministry for Social Planning to attend to the social development of special groups and various other sectors of society. Through its machinery and special funds, this Ministry addresses matters of need and poverty, while trying to cushion the effects of liberalized trade and free economic policies.

All these measures are aimed at bringing about justice and social balance. Participation in public and national administration has been achieved through the holding of elections for national councils, provincial legislative councils and the presidency.

The protection of the environment and the development of infrastructure are a priority for all government organs. A Ministry for the Environment was therefore established to coordinate efforts to protect the environment and to follow up the implementation of laws and legislation aimed at doing so. No infrastructure projects or development and investment plans will be implemented to the detriment of the ecosystem.

With regard to the Government's legal and organizational capabilities, all laws have been reviewed in order to ensure proper public administration, bring them into line with new government policies and ensure implementation of the principles of competence, accountability and the rule of law. Administrative oversight organs and recourse mechanisms have been established.

We support the recommendations of the Group of Experts as a whole, provided that the special conditions of every State are taken into account. We feel that some subjects of special concern to developing nations should be highlighted. First, assistance should be provided to Governments for the reorientation and retraining of officials in public administration, in order to improve their performance and translate policies into concrete action in the service of civilians. Second, support should be provided for building up the administrative structures and human resources required for the management of scarce and limited resources, to ensure their maximum utilization.

Third, support should be provided for building up crisis management capabilities. Fourth, support should be provided for building up organizational, planning and executive branches of local and national councils, in order to achieve decentralization and self-government. Fifth, assistance should be provided for building and strengthening database systems, so that data can be made more accessible to assist in the development and implementation of policies and measures. Sixth, government efforts to establish links between the educational system and the job market should be supported.

Seventh, support should be provided for the promotion of policies and programmes aimed at creating jobs. Eighth, support should be provided for building government institutions that work towards establishing peace in countries afflicted by conflicts, so that such States can promote peace, achieve stability and social security and channel their national resources for development purposes. Ninth, support should be provided for administrative and financial institutions at the regional level.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Babacar Nene Mbaye, Minister of Modernization of the State of Senegal.

Mr. Nene Mbaye (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Senegal would like, through me, to express its appreciation for this resumed session, which gives us the opportunity to reflect together, with the diversity and wealth of our own respective national experiences, on the key issue of public administration and development.

Senegal, like most countries of sub-Saharan Africa, is faced with the urgent need to devote major efforts to the promotion of its economy. In contrast with Europe, the absence of a middle class able to launch the process of economic and social development, the weakness of the industrial fabric, the well-known inadequacy of public facilities and national structure were, at the time of independence, major challenges to be met. Hence the need for State intervention, including through protectionism, to modify the nature of comparative advantages. The absence of a dynamic private sector and the circumstances of the world economy prompted African leaders to establish the need for State intervention in order to promote economic and social development.

This is why public administration, an instrument for the implementation of State policies, took over all the functions of sovereignty, as well as the economic and social activities of the 1960s and 1970s, as an integral part of the authority and tasks of the State. This approach led to a proliferation of structures and administrative activities and contributed to the birth of an overgrown and disjointed administration.

The establishment and subsequent rapid growth of a development administration, of a large quasi-public sector — a State monopoly of the marketing of agricultural goods and minerals — exemplified the expanding functions of public administration. This expansion of public power, along with the concomitant and continuous need for more foreign financing, significantly affected the economic balance.

In our countries, public administration has definitely not lived up to the hopes placed in it for the establishment of conditions to promote economic and social development. Over the years, it became cumbersome and weighed down the economy instead of driving it.

Under the effects of the crisis in public action, the complexity, weight, inefficiency, and inertia of the system affected its capacity to provide services. The breakdown of the 1980s led to the adoption of a programme of structural adjustment, of which the rationalization of public administration is a major component. Never before had the problem of public administration and development been so acute and constant.

This awareness has prompted us to give priority to state modernization, which means both openness and refusal to stagnate. As our Head of State, President Abdou Diouf, recalled,

> "administration cannot be set in its rules, isolated from the movement created by the changing conditions of economic life".

In fact, at the end of the millennium the world is experiencing changes of unprecedented scope, especially in the area of new technologies, which are upsetting traditional economic and cultural models and causing upheaval within nations and among peoples. Therefore, if society is to progress, it is urgent to open doors, to unfetter, to deregulate.

Accordingly, our Head of State decided to establish a Ministry for Modernization of the State. Aware of the importance of the stakes, this Ministry is trying to live up to the ambitions of our country in a demanding environment and is acting in many different ways.

The new administrative culture, of which communication is a significant aspect, presupposes a streamlined and transparent administration that tries to simplify for the users of public services, including economic players, all of the rules and procedures that are restrictive to a greater or lesser degree.

The administration of things, which is difficult, and that of people, which is even more so, should promote new approaches in the management of civil service personnel, without neglecting the management of careers, which, in a state of law, is the very essence of civil service.

Public management constitutes the middle road between management techniques for private enterprise and techniques to transform the rules and practices of public administration for the sake of integrity of public service principles. It is therefore possible to work in a different way to enhance the effectiveness of the administration through techniques applied in other fields, while adapting them to specific needs. Accordingly, our Government, on the instructions of our Head of State, launched the process by introducing a new degree of autonomy and new procedures — in short, by giving more freedom to initiatives.

In order to increase the effectiveness of administration and to improve its work, a strategic and organizational audit of the ministries has been set up. Its purpose is to redefine the missions of administration by refocusing them on the essential areas of generating strategies and policy, follow-up evaluation and programming, while streamlining certain implementation tasks. To make this more effective, the audit is focusing first on three ministries rather than the entire range.

Among the objectives of the audit are the necessary refocusing of the administration on its essential tasks; the organization and establishment of well-adapted structures and flexible procedures to carry out these tasks; and the establishment of adequate resources, both material and human, for the effective and efficient functioning of the administration.

The approaches used have profoundly changed the role of the administration by relieving it of certain implementation tasks and so that in the end only those relating to the identification of strategies and policies, to planning and to follow-up will be preserved.

The first actions already undertaken involve the establishment of new structures and a new framework of rules, the evaluation and selection of personnel by a private study group entrusted with recommending suitable personnel needed for the proper functioning of the organizational structures. This is carried out within a predefined framework. The audit has involved the job description, proposals for model structures, ministry personnel, the definition of training and action programmes, the formulation of a social plan to redeploy personnel without jobs but with abilities useful to other structures.

The expected results of this work are the perfect matching of personnel with the tasks and objectives of the ministerial structures, the establishment of communications systems and an ongoing training policy, the preparation of a decentralization charter, profitability for certain structures and the redefinition of tasks in order to reduce costs and increase efficiency in public action. With this audit, we intend to preserve the governing tasks of the State.

In addition to refocusing the State on its essential tasks, as suggested by the organizational and strategic audit, Senegal has just begun, with the help of the development management support office and with the support of a Canadian-Senegalese consortium, a real accounting audit of State personnel files.

This second audit fits in the global context of public administration reform to improve management tools, especially for control over salaries and personnel.

This real accounting audit of personnel files, accompanied by a legal and organizational analysis, has revealed a certain number of failings that can be addressed through a proposed organizational arrangement linked to a permanent system of administrative management. None the less, to safeguard the audit's achievements, temporary measures will be taken before June 1996 in order to have a single personnel file and an operational information system.

The need to stabilize the macroeconomic framework arising from the current crisis in public management, characterized by diminished public resources and the need to manage costs, to decrease expenditures and reduce the budget deficit, leads inescapably to changes in public systems of financial management.

Public sector reform and the implementation of a new organizational culture mean improvements in financial management, especially with regard to arrears of payments and rationalizing expenditures and budgetary procedures. Reducing public expenditure has been one of the main elements of the stabilization and structural adjustment policy. Although good results have been obtained, it is mainly investment and maintenance expenditures that have been dealt with, and substantial efforts are needed with regard to salaries and debt-servicing.

Control of public spending has been limited because of inadequate wage restraints, overspending, unforeseen expenditures and the use of credits intended for investment to meet operational costs. To remedy this, the Government has decided on two complementary steps. One is to allocate any surplus income to public expenditures other than wages and salaries, and the other is to simplify and rationalize budgetary procedures. The Government has therefore decided to fix the salaries bill at 40 per cent of total income. All surplus income will go to other expenditures, with the State ensuring that investment and expenditure on materials are given priority in the allocation of resources. This has been decided because of the State's awareness of the need to make public expenditure meet the needs of the growth strategy.

The forthcoming holding by the Government of a seminar on the budget will make it possible to reach consensus on criteria to identify expenditures that should be provided for on an annual basis in the finance Bill.

Improvement of public financial management must be closely linked to strengthening human resources to establish a climate of competence and professionalism in administration, in both the public and private sectors. In this respect, a certain number of measures have been initiated. They include reform of the national schools, professional training, retraining and motivation. National training schools have so far been the high road to civil service careers. The schools formerly met the exclusive demands of the State, but in today's context of structural adjustment policies and the quest to balance public finances they produce more graduates than the civil service can absorb. Thus the schools have been taking in fewer and fewer students, which has resulted in the cost of training going up without the quality of education improving.

In addition, the right to training, which to some extent comes before the right to employment, has been sacrificed. In this context, and to avoid a distortion of the education system in relation to measures being applied to various levels of the national socio-economic and financial system, in-depth consideration has been given to restructuring our national training schools.

After this in-depth study, carried on in various workshops and committees, a number of guidelines have been adopted. They include the elimination of automatic direct access to the civil service for all of those leaving training institutions; the opening up of training institutions to the private sector, as well as to foreign students, especially those from the subregion, provided they pay for their training; revision of the institutions' current rules to permit them to generate their own resources and to allow for self-management; and revitalizing the work of improving the various institutions, work in which the potential users will be able to participate.

The growing complexity of society, exacerbated by rapid technological change, and above all the accelerated globalization of the economy make ongoing training imperative; hence the need, in addition to quality training, for recycling, improvement, renewal and expansion of abilities for organizations and the countries that, following our example, seek excellence. In this context, the State must meet the ongoing training needs of its employees through its own means, complemented by international bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This requires returning the human resources function to ministerial departments so that training needs and the related training plans can be properly determined.

Vocational training is another important part of strengthening human resources. In this regard, the restoration of vocational training centres established immediately after independence, in response to the urgent need for various professionals, is an urgent necessity.

An analysis of voluntary separation programmes — about 5,000 out of 60,000 civil servants have left — has made apparent, among other things, financial constraints linked to lack of support from development partners and to the personnel structure. As a result, our negotiated separation programmes have been radically altered, with the goal of progressively retraining administration employees and improving their expertise. Selectivity is the big difference from the voluntary separation programmes, because the new programme will concern only those employees the State chooses to separate. It is imperative to revitalize the administration by replacing those unable to adapt to economic and social change with specialists available in the market place.

The reform of the vocational training schools by the elimination of automatic recruitment enables the administration to recruit selectively those in whom it is interested. Aside from retraining employees, a more efficient management of human resources will be sought by improving the system of evaluation. The current system, based on grading, is less an instrument of human resources management than a tool to protect personnel against arbitrariness, and its basis has become increasingly outdated.

This system of evaluation does not meet the needs of a management that is taking into account merit, results and motivation. It is therefore necessary to move from the grading system to a participatory evaluation system, which seeks to judge the intrinsic merits of the employee, to assess his or her work objectively and to select the best performers and guide their future careers.

That is why it is important to establish new assessment procedures, with varying scales, adapted to the functions and category of personnel. This imminent change, in the process of being finalized, should guarantee the emergence of a system of performance motivation based on merit and innovation.

The regions, which have been turned into local bodies of a type new to Senegal, should, because of their limited number — 10 — and the breadth of the powers the States will transfer to them, strengthen local government and promote participatory democracy. Regionalization will immediately change the administrative landscape profoundly if significant progress is made in the decentralization of powers.

Decentralization, with powerful regions and autonomous local communities, should be accompanied by an end to concentration of power, with representatives of the State being the natural, credible spokesmen of the citizens and local representatives. The region is the ideal framework for an administration characterized by an economic and social dynamic, frank and constructive dialogue between elected representatives and citizens, and coordination and a willingness to act at the operational level of local communities.

The region also offers the opportunity to strengthen the policy of rationalization of expenditures and the simplification of administrative procedures.

Public administration is a complex system whose elements interact and influence each other and the environment, especially the economic environment.

Our Head of State, President Abdou Diouf, in his message to the nation on 3 April 1990, expressed his concern and recommended changing administration so that it may fulfil

> "its tasks of general interest without placing useless obstacles in the way of managers or entrepreneurs".

This is why a streamlining of administrative procedures, an important part of the modernization strategy, has been undertaken, with the major objective of ensuring a favourable environment for private initiative and high quality services for users — business undertakings and citizens.

Regulation in decentralized management must make it possible to establish a flexible system, with staff mobility; it must also be able to anticipate change and the needs of users, to understand the threats and to grasp the opportunities.

Flexibility, speed and innovation, but also productivity, must today be the attributes of administration for development. This is why, in addition to streamlining formalities and administrative procedures, liberalizing some sectors, introducing autonomy and retraining workers, we need to take other action, including providing information systems, modernizing the education system and ensuring ongoing training. These tasks have been begun. This means that society is progressively being restructured around the State, which is the driving force and at the same time plays a monitoring role.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the challenges of development and the constraints of globalization of the economy mean that we need to move quickly towards self-regulation in a modernized Senegalese society which has reached a new level of maturity and which has new responsibilities brought by the winds of change.

In a democratic country, public administration which is effective and enlightened because it is refocused on its essential tasks can contribute powerfully to a country's economic development not only by coordinating the efforts of public and private enterprise, but also by attracting worthwhile investment.

This important resumed session is certainly timely, and will give new impetus to the efforts being made in all Member States to modernize structures and create administrations favourable to development. Senegal hopes that a useful follow-up and evaluation mechanism will be adopted as a result of this session.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the Permanent Representative of India.

Mr. Shah (India): It gives me great pleasure to participate on behalf of India in this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly convened to discuss the very important issue of public administration and development. My delegation would like to pay tribute to the delegation of Morocco for the efforts Morocco has put into the adoption of resolution 49/136 and the convening of these special meetings.

Economic growth and sustainable development are issues of importance for all countries. While the problems of managing sustained economic growth and development are different for developing countries, they are no less important in the developed countries, many of which have gone through recession and reduction in gross domestic product growth in recent years. All countries, therefore, face the complex task, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, of trying to redefine the role of government in the pursuit of economic growth and sustainable development. All countries face the challenges arising from that pursuit in regard to the introduction of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness, as well as the need to strengthen financial management capacities.

My delegation welcomes the holding of these special meetings, primarily because the General Assembly, in its resolution 49/136, acknowledged the importance of exchanging views and experiences of Member States in order to promote better understanding of the role of public administration and development and to enhance international cooperation in this field. In fact, this is the first time that the experiences gained by Member nations in strengthening public administration in their own countries have been exchanged at this forum. We have gained considerable insight from the national experiences of Member States as described in their statements. It is significant that in every case the national experience has been tailored to meet the very special needs of the country concerned.

The membership of the United Nations varies from multi-ethnic, multi-religious countries of large size and population to culturally homogeneous small countries. In most cases, the motivation for adopting new measures or ideas in the field of public administration was the need and demand for such changes from within those countries. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize what the Secretary General's report points out: that the challenges which Governments worldwide face in establishing a framework of public administration and a financial system for sustainable economic development are not just domestic influences, but are also unpredictable external factors. It would, therefore, greatly assist national efforts if simultaneous measures were also taken to make the external environment more stable and predictable. Indeed, the need for fundamental review in the role of public administration and development has become urgent because countries have to meet the complex developmental challenges of dealing with the impact of increasing globalization and the role of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, while focusing on the primary objectives of eliminating poverty and promoting social justice and economic growth.

The United Nations and its agencies have so far focused their efforts on providing technical and other assistance to Member nations based upon specific requests from them in assisting these countries to meet the challenges. The Secretary-General's report states that the core theme of the efforts of the United Nations in public administration have been, and should continue to be, assisting Member States in two broad areas: first, by generating and disseminating information on experiences; and, secondly, by customizing, on request, appropriate improvement programmes and practices in individual countries.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's observation that United Nations assistance should continue with these two core themes, and should be based solely on the request of the individual countries. There have been some suggestions that the United Nations should move into the area of standard-setting or of laying down targets to measure efficiency in public administration in Member countries. The diversity among Member States of the United Nations, the different stages of their development, the special circumstances that exist in each country or region, and different levels of their infrastructure, both physical and human, are only some of the reasons why it would be unwise for the United Nations to pursue suggestions on standard-setting. The information on national experiences that we have gathered during these last three days demonstrates that, while there are effectively certain basic principles which most countries have followed in their national efforts, these guidelines or beneficial national approaches can be adopted by other countries only if they feel that adoption of such approaches would benefit them, or if these national experiences could be tailored to their requirements.

What is equally important is for the international community to consider laying down guidelines or principles for other players — namely, the civil society and the private sector — to follow if public administration reforms are to succeed in various countries.

We all know, for example, that corruption in public administration is not unrelated to the promotion of corruption by the private sector. The process of administration, whether in developed or in developing countries, has often been vitiated by the existence of vested interests. Our deliberations in this special session should not focus solely on the improvements of public administration and financial structures of governments, but should also address the role of the private sector, the manipulation of market forces and speculation in financial markets, which have a direct link to the fabric and structure of public administration in all countries. While we appreciate the effort that has gone into the Secretary-General's report, we believe that greater comprehensiveness covering these aspects would have provided a firmer basis for our deliberations.

I will now briefly survey our experience in India since achieving independence in 1947. Although we started with advantages in the area of available infrastructure, this was more than offset by the daunting task of establishing and strengthening already existing structures for a multiracial, multi-religious, multilingual, democratic, newly independent developing country. We proceeded to achieve this with a special focus on India's needs, and our Constitution set forth the institutional bases for resilient administrative processes, especially in the crucial areas of legal, judicial, parliamentary and democratic structures. The result over the years is a solid administrative and bureaucratic framework, the strength of which is comparable to the best available experience anywhere. Our administrative structure in the governmental sector has, as an important feature, embodied the policy of affirmative action for the less privileged sections of our society. This institutional strength has given our country the unique privilege of being able to offer assistance and training under several national priority programmes of technical assistance to other developing countries in the area of public administration.

The constitutional protection that has accompanied the creation and protection of these institutions has ensured their strengthening over the years. Such institutional strength has been supplemented by periodic reviews and monitoring for improvements and strengthening. Our country's experience and maturity in dealing with maintenance of law and order over the years, in our vast and diverse country, as well as preserving the political stability and the open and transparent democratic processes of the country, is standing testimony to my Government's commitment to public administration and procedures and to the strength of our institutions. These efforts have been accompanied by a particularly vocal free press in the second most populated country in the world, which has made these accomplishments significantly more creditable.

India's emphasis on training of manpower and human resources, assisted by our institutional strength, has made it possible for India to put in place already several mechanisms for follow-up to major international and United Nations conferences, like the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the World Conference on Women, the United Nations Conference on Population and Development, and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. There is constant monitoring of possible improvement in the quality of the civil service through the continuing efforts of our Union Public Service Commission authorities, one of our oldest, established and most respected institutions. It is also a great achievement for us that civil service training institutes offer and receive several candidates for training from other countries.

Our efforts in achieving institutional and human resources standards have been accompanied by an equal commitment to distributive justice, especially in the wake of our market reforms under way. Our recent efforts at market reform, the enthusiasm with which we have been able to embrace the revolution in information technology — especially in the software area — and our considerable advances in indigenous scientific capabilities, have to a large extent been possible only because of the existence of the structures in public administration that can help institutionalize assimilation and progress.

In a few days, India will hold its tenth general elections for the Federal Parliament and a number of State Assemblies. With an electorate estimated at over 550 million people, it will be the largest free election in the history of the world. The human resources required to manage this huge exercise will come entirely from within India, and will be drawn from the public administration system, and the law and order machinery of India.

Before I end, I would like to mention that in November 1995 the Commonwealth Heads of Governments endorsed the Commonwealth initiative for public service reform to provide a focus for collaboration between Commonwealth countries on the basis of their national experience, and in which we, of course, participate.

I wish to conclude by once again expressing our deep appreciation to the Secretary General and to the delegation of Morocco for their initial efforts on an issue where a great deal of work is yet to be done.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Nicaraguan delegation welcomes the discussions at this resumed session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. Knowledge of the views and experiences of other countries will help us to better understand the role of public administration in development, will help encourage international cooperation and will help us to avoid errors that have already been encountered by other Administrations. It will also help to strengthen the United Nations system with regard to creating a capacity in the area of public administration and finance.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/50/847), which will be very useful to the Governments of Member States. We support his comments and his focus on the role the United Nations can play in this area.

At the end of the last decade Nicaragua was in a situation of civil war, aggravated by the cold war confrontation. The Esquipulas Agreements reached by the Presidents of Central America were very important in bringing the conflict to an end and in the holding of elections in February 1990, with international monitoring including a United Nations presence; on 25 April 1990, for the first time in the history of Nicaragua, this led to the peaceful transfer of power to an opposition party.

When the present Government of Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro took over, Nicaragua was in a state of war. It had to carry out the demobilization of more than 20,000 men who had taken up arms. It also had to reduce an army of almost 90,000 soldiers. These were key tasks in ending a civil war which had gone on for almost 10 years. Although these tasks were complex, they were just the beginning of a peace process and efforts to modernize the State, in order to adapt it to new regional circumstances and the globalization of international relations.

We had to ease the return to a productive civilian life of those who had taken up arms and given them opportunities for development, so as to avoid a return to the socio-economic conditions which had led to war, which could destroy the peace. The new Government had to go through a difficult transitional period unprecedented in the history of our country. We had to shift from war to peace; from authoritarianism to democracy, with full participation; from a centralized economy to a free market system, with social justice; from international isolation to political, economic and social reintegration. All of this required effective, efficient public administration in order to try to achieve sustainable development.

The current Government inherited major macroeconomic imbalances. Hyperinflation rose to 33,000 per cent in 1988 and exports were just one third of imports. Production levels had fallen to those of the 1960s. We therefore had to institute a thorough programme of stabilization, adjustment and incentives to end these distortions. Prices were completely deregulated in this State modernization process. We eliminated the State monopoly on foreign trade and the financial system; so far we have privatized more than 90 per cent of State enterprises, and we are in the process of privatizing enterprises which were for long — or always — State monopolies, including telecommunications and electric power.

Under an effective banking regulator, various private banks with national and foreign capital have been established. This has allowed us to bring back capital, helping job creation and Nicaragua's agricultural, trade and industrial development.

Our current Government had to reduce substantially the size of the State bureaucracy, which had reached enormous proportions and led to great imbalances. The shrinking of the State was accompanied by the decentralization of the Government and a shift of responsibilities to the regional, municipal and community levels and to the private sector in areas in which it could be more efficient. This was done with the aim of encouraging development policies and satisfying the basic needs of the population.

The initiatives to modernize the Nicaraguan State led to the elimination of various institutions that responded to other political precepts or exercised functions that, with the proper motivation, the private sector could perform more efficiently. Other entities were changed in order to respond more efficiently and effectively to the problems of the population. One example of this is the Nicaraguan Institute of Social Security. It was separated from the welfare department, which was allocated to another institution, enabling it to provide better services at lower cost. Private clinics and hospitals were contracted to provide health services for people with insurance, and the Institute's existing infrastructure was improved, also leading to better service.

The process of political harmonization and reconciliation initiated by the Government encouraged the individual and collective participation of civil society in all activities, promoting a climate of trust that to date has facilitated the functioning of a growing free market economy with social justice. The plan for occupational redeployment, using such incentives as offering one month's pay for every year worked and, for those who accept, assistance in establishing small businesses or in acquiring shares in established businesses, has been a success.

The current Government of Nicaragua has worked intensively to solve the problem of property. Thousands of properties that were State owned when the current Government took office have been returned to their original owners. To facilitate the resolution of this problem, constitutional provisions have been strengthened, and a conference to consider important options was held in July 1995, sponsored by the Carter Center and the United Nations Development Programme. At the same time, the National Assembly adopted a law on property that, within the time-frame of its implementation, will put an end to this problem once and for all.

Today we can assert that the country is enjoying the greatest degree of political freedom in its history. Great progress has been made in the institutionalization of democracy, and resources that were once devoted to war are now devoted to education, health and strengthening the state of law and institutionality.

In the framework of the transition to and consolidation of democracy, Nicaragua has undertaken important experiments that, being in their early stages, require international support. They are our point of departure towards a determined process aimed at achieving sustainable development in the context of an effective and efficient public administration.

These initiatives include, *inter alia*, such activities as the strengthening of local governments; economic improvement at the local level, including aspects of productive employment; creating small businesses and capitalization; organizing marketing; occupational training; and integrating women into economic and development activities. They also include improving public health, with emphasis on prevention and service for the most vulnerable groups — especially children — including planning, organizing and financing local health services; improving basic public education, with emphasis on reducing illiteracy and on vocational training, with community participation, improved educational infrastructure, the promotion of culture and so on; and the improvement of living conditions, physical planning and local infrastructure, including participatory analysis of the environmental situation, the conservation of natural resources, improved availability of drinking water and environmental sanitation services. Untiring efforts have also been made in the promotion of human rights, particularly in respect of information, democratic participation and the administrative and legal functions of democratic institutions guaranteeing the civil and political rights of the population, including documentation, the local administration of justice and civic education.

Last June, in the framework of this process, some amendments of the 1987 political Constitution went into effect in Nicaragua, thus culminating a long period of national debate between the executive and legislative organs, the political parties and civil society. The reformed Constitution ensured, at the highest legal and political levels, the continuity of the democratic process, freedom, and the protection of all the rights and interests of citizens. This reform is the product of our society's political pluralism and is the common denominator of differing ideologies, even antagonistic ones.

The reform altered 65 of the Constitution's 202 articles, with respect to individual rights; the rights and responsibilities of and guarantees for the Nicaraguan people; political and social rights; the rights of the Nicaraguan family; defence and the national economy; agrarian reform and public finances; education and culture; the organization of the State; municipal affairs; and the Atlantic Coast communities. It also established the supremacy of constitutional rule.

The major objective of the reform was, *inter alia*, the political modernization of Nicaragua, giving the country institutions that resolve political conflicts without violence through the introduction of secure and reliable processes for resolving differences. The constitutional reform guarantees minorities the right of opposition on the basis of the principle that democracy is measured by its respect for the majority in elections and afterwards by its respect for minorities.

In matters of defence, the role of the armed forces has been redefined. They have been declared entirely subordinate to the political Constitution as an apolitical, non-partisan, non-deliberative body obedient to civil authority; mandatory military service has also been abolished. The special exemption has been eliminated, and it has been clearly established that in no case may a civilian be judged by military courts. Similarly, soldiers will be judged by civil courts when their crimes are not of a military nature.

In the redefinition of State functions, free education and public health have been guaranteed. The reform also includes the process of legislative drafting, which was not provided for in the 1987 Constitution. The State Attorney's Office for Human Rights has been created as an independent entity to monitor respect for human rights in our society.

The Electoral Power has been confirmed as a State authority and has been assigned exclusive oversight of elections, plebiscites and referendums. No appeal of its decisions in electoral matters is admitted.

The judiciary has been allocated a fixed percentage of the Republic's budget. The membership of the Supreme Court of Justice has been set at 12 and its powers broadened. These reforms are helping to establish better conditions for harmony between Nicaraguans in various aspects of coexistence.

In respect of this resumed session, we agree with those who have said that the United Nations should consider doing some follow-up work on the recommendations on public administration and development within the context of existing structures, but that it should not establish new, costly mechanisms to do so.

We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in strengthening public administration and good governance, mainly in order to guarantee the preservation of public functions and services in countries in transition, to develop strategies and initiatives for rebuilding public administration in those countries that, like ours, are only just beginning to recover from conflict and have just set out on the path of reconstruction, and to support technical cooperation programmes in the neediest countries when requested to do so.

We feel that United Nations activities in public administration and finance should be developed, taking into account the priority areas identified by the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance at its twelfth meeting. With respect to this and to the general follow-up of the subject, we believe that the United Nations Development Programme, which has been doing work of this kind, must continue to play a primary role in this field, helping to coordinate activities in the field at the inter-agency level and promoting complementary activities at the bilateral level, particularly in State reform in the economic and social fields and in the justice sector.

We are convinced that an effective and efficient public administration is the foundation of a strong civil and democratic society. The achievement of this objective requires important changes that all countries must foster. In this effort, United Nations support is essential for strengthening the capacities of our institutions in the right areas.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on His Excellency Mr. Assouma Yacoubou, Minister for the Civil Service, Labour and Administrative Reform of Benin.

Mr. Yacoubou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and pleasure for me to speak on behalf of my country, the Republic of Benin, before this Assembly on such an important topic as public administration and development. I wish to take this opportunity to pay a sincere tribute to the sisterly delegation of Morocco, which played such an important role in the convening of this session.

In 1990, Benin embarked on a process of democratization with the convening of a National Conference of Active Forces of the Nation. This process is gradually taking root through the holding of free and transparent elections with a very high rate of participation, and the establishment of checks-and-balances organs, such as the Constitutional Court, the Audio-Visual and Communications Authority and the Economic and Social Council. The pursuit of this process calls for a revolution in thinking and a revolutionizing of the entire administration to meet new demands.

It is our profound conviction today that no administrative reform can succeed without a thorough reform of the State, which for us means the establishment of good governance. The reform of the State is the precursor of a real administration of development. This is what underlies and strengthens the responsibility of leaders, establishes the State of law and assures citizens their full enjoyment of fundamental individual and collective freedoms and thus a better organization of civil society and the development of private initiative.

In his book entitled *A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Mamadou Dia of the World Bank wrote:

> "In many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the ineffectiveness of the civil service threatens almost all development efforts ... This crisis is doubly serious at a time when structural adjustment programs are requiring key central civil service institutions to plan and manage fundamental transformations in the economy." (*World Bank technical paper number 225, Africa Technical Department series, pp. 5-6*)

On page 6 he added that at the end of 1991 there were 57 operations supported by the World Bank in Africa, with structural adjustment loans, technical assistance loans and projects linked to the social dimension of development. Further on, the author concluded that:

> "The results are, at best, mixed". (*ibid. p. 10*)

The subtopic of strengthening the capacity for policy development, restructuring the administrative system and civil service reform — the subject of our comments — emerges from the fact that, in many developing countries, structural adjustment programmes have been speedily assimilated into administrative reform programmes. The structural adjustment programmes certainly made it possible to re-establish a certain macroeconomic balance, but no sign of change or improvement in the effectiveness of public administration has been seen in the countries subjected to the downsizing and rebalancing advocated by the Bretton Woods institutions.

The problems that undermine most African public administrations have remained very acute. Not only have they remained command administrations inherited from the model passed down by the former colonizer, but the moral and ethical values that once characterized them have also degenerated. They have become sluggish, too sluggish to respond to the needs of the private sector, where time is money, and too corrupt to evolve.

It is therefore urgent to move from that type of administration to a real development administration through reform of the civil service based on the complete restructuring of the system of administration inspired by a strengthening of the capacity to develop reform policies.

Why must the capacity to develop reform policy be strengthened? How and by whom should it be undertaken? The first question of this subtopic of our concern has already found its solution in the preceding considerations. We simply wish to recall here that we must move from a command administration, an inflexible, patrimonial administration, to a development administration.

As regards the answers to the questions "By whom?" and "How?", we beg the indulgence of this Assembly to cite Benin's experience.

The public sector has generally been the subject of many statements and criticisms. None the less, it remains relatively misunderstood from an objective and technical standpoint. Hence, analyses and diagnoses run the risk of being based on a fragile or erroneous foundation. In order to avoid this risk, Benin first set out to deepen knowledge of its public sector. Thus, seven preparatory studies have been undertaken in fields as diverse and important as the following: first, remuneration in the civil service; second; summary of audits conducted in certain Ministries; third, rapid diagnostic assessments of Ministries that have not been audited; fourth, administrative practices and the State of law; fifth, analysis of the general status of the civil service; sixth, inquiry into the image of the public sector; and, seventh, ethics, professional conduct and motivation of State employees.

These studies cover a broad field and have allowed us to achieve the objective of improving our knowledge base on the mechanisms of Benin's public administration. None the less, certain matters, such as decentralization and devolution, were not covered by the studies because they are the purview of the General Office of Territorial Administration, set up in 1993.

The studies thus conducted provide a very important operational data base on the public sector in Benin. They have since been summarized and submitted to the General Office of the Public Service, which drew on them in making recommendations and proposals that have helped to design and implement the plan of reform and modernization of Benin's public administration, a general policy document on administrative reform. It involves eight programmes and implementation steps aimed at improving the productivity of the public institutions, making leaders accountable, and improving user services and civil society organization.

We feel that the approach taken and the participants in this endeavour — which, like any human endeavour, can certainly be improved — are of great importance and should be emphasized.

To accomplish this reform plan, Benin relied foremost on national competence. Thus, national consultants conducted the entire diagnosis of Benin's public sector. They did, however, benefit from the methodological assistance of an international consultant made available to the Civil Service Ministry to that end. The consultant's work involved the drafting, in cooperation with managers in the Ministry, of the terms of reference of the different studies. The consultant followed the work of the national consultants throughout the study and made observations wherever necessary.

Each of the studies clearly diagnosed the subsector under consideration and then made proposals to correct any failings and distortions noticed. The proposals and recommendations were studied, analysed, complemented and endorsed by the General Office, which rated the participation of representatives of civil society at 75 per cent.

This original approach by Benin to the reform of its civil service had three major advantages: first, the transfer of skills and the strengthening of national expertise; secondly, the relatively low cost of the operation, compared with what it would have cost had it been conducted completely by international consultants; thirdly, the integration of national cultural and moral values in the different proposals and recommendations, thus easing implementation of this reform policy by the citizens at large and by the users of public services in particular.

What suggestions can we make to strengthen the ability to draw up policies to reform the public service?

To strengthen the capacity to develop reform policies and increase the chances of success, the developing countries in general, and those of Africa in particular, need to reduce their excessive dependence on foreign expertise. The United Nations should increasingly reduce its tendency to spend large sums on international expertise, as the results are less and less appropriate to the development of the nations assisted. The scale of remuneration under the United Nations programme provides for international experts to be paid from $250 to $400 a day, whereas the range for national consultants is only $27 to $87 a day.

We remain convinced, however, that it is not yet possible to do without foreign expertise entirely in all fields. None the less, we make the following suggestions with regard to civil service reform.

First, the United Nations, through its specialized agencies, should define and implement a clear, precise policy for the transfer of skills and the strengthening of national expertise.

Secondly, exchanges of experience should be organized between the countries of the South and between the countries of the North and South.

Thirdly, international conferences and seminars should be organized on experience of civil service reform.

Fourthly, private sector management tools should be adapted for public administration and use.

Lastly, there should be a policy on training those at the managerial and decision-making levels to develop the ability to diagnose problems.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Babar (Pakistan): Permit me, first, to felicitate the delegation of Morocco for their endeavours in focusing the attention of Member States on the exceedingly important issue of public administration and development. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (A/50/847) on this issue.

The consideration by the General Assembly of the issue of public administration and development is most timely. Recent global changes have led to a questioning of the role of all institutions involved in development. There has been a particularly intense debate on the role of the public sector. Our deliberations this week will be invaluable in bringing together the various strands of this debate and, hopefully, in pointing to ways to optimize the role of public administration institutions in promoting development.

At the conceptual level there has been a remarkable convergence in recent years on the framework in which public administration institutions should function. The principles of transparency, accountability and greater participation by people in administrative processes that affect their lives are no longer viewed as idealistic slogans to which lip service must be paid. Rather, these have come to be accepted as fundamental prerequisites for promoting development.

Likewise, the contentious issue of the relationship of public and private sectors in promoting development has largely ended. There is broad agreement that the public sector should concentrate on creating conditions which will allow the private sector to promote economic growth in a socially responsible manner. This could involve activities such as formulating rational regulatory codes, implementing infrastructure projects, promoting economic enterprises in economically disadvantaged regions and training a skilled workforce.

While there have been breakthroughs at the conceptual level, difficulties persist in translating agreed principles into practice. Transparency, accountability and participation are principles that are not easy to operationalize. The dynamics of large bureaucracies, the varying levels of administrative expertise and the differences in local conditions make it impossible to devise generic prescriptions on how to put these principles into effect.

Similarly, while there is an understanding of the desirable relationship between the public and private sectors, there is difficulty in striking the right balance between the two. Again, local conditions are the determining factor. The optimal mix of public and private sector activities is predicated upon factors specific to each country. This leads to the inescapable conclusion that principles pertaining to the role of public administration in development need to be applied with due regard to local conditions.

While in each country public administrators are faced with tasks and challenges specific to that country, certain challenges appear to be common to administrators, depending on whether they belong to developed or developing countries.

In developed countries public administrators need to have a better understanding of the impact of the macroeconomic policies that they formulate on the world at large. The soundness of these policies, especially fiscal, monetary and trade policies, should not be evaluated solely on the basis of their immediate effect on national economies. Rather, the policies should be judged to be sound only if these do not hinder the prospects of developing economies. This is simply because in an increasingly integrated global economy growth in the advanced countries cannot be sustained over the long term if the growth of developing countries is not ensured as well.

In developing countries public administrators need to enhance their understanding of the emergent global economic and technological forces. Information based service enterprises are supplanting the manufacturing sector as the main engine of economic growth. If developing countries are to become truly developed they have to adopt modes of production based on information and communications technology. Mere industrialization will not be enough. Also, new modes of production may hold answers to many development problems. For instance, the problems associated with uncontrolled urbanization may be mitigated by using modern communications technologies, which allow for the dispersal of work units outside urban areas, thus lessening the burden on already overcrowded cities. Educational opportunities can also be provided to a far greater number of people, while avoiding huge expenditures on putting up college and university buildings. The possibilities for circumventing the traditional development constraints are tremendous. What is required is the ability to understand and harness emerging technological forces while tackling these constraints.

In Pakistan particular attention is being given to two aspects of public administration in order to meet today's development challenges.

First, at the field level there is an emphasis on the participatory model of development. Successful initiatives by non-official actors in promoting grass-roots, community-based development are being intensively studied and replicated on a wider scale. The public administration machinery at the district level is being geared to undertake development efforts from a bottom-up, and not a top-down, perspective.

Secondly, at the policy level there is a systematic programme to make public administrators aware of the profound economic and technological changes sweeping the world, and of their implications for the country's development. There is an increasing stress on providing civil servants with continued education and training programmes. A network of federal and provincial academies and institutes offer courses that enable public administrators to factor in contemporary trends while formulating development policy.

The experience and expertise Pakistan has acquired in the area of public administration are being shared with other countries. Public administrators from a number of countries are participating in different management courses in Pakistan. A special programme has been established for Africa, which enables civil servants from that continent to obtain management training at the junior as well as at the mid-career levels. Needless to say, these programmes have been of immense benefit to our own administrators, as they have allowed them to share a wealth of different development experiences.

We are of the view that the United Nations has a significant role to play in enhancing the effectiveness of public administration institutions of all countries. The United Nations can be a facilitator for the exchange of national experiences and, equally important, it can be a provider of technical assistance for enhancing public administration capacities. We have noted with interest the institutional mechanisms proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/50/847) to achieve these ends.

The final organizational arrangements that are agreed upon should ensure two things. First, the existing duplication of efforts should be eliminated, and, secondly, the actors within the United Nations that have acquired expertise in this area at the operational level should be further strengthened.

If the United Nations institutional ability to enhance public administration capacity is strengthened, and we attain greater clarity on the conceptual issues involved in the area of public administration and development, then this session of the General Assembly will have achieved its objective.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the Permanent Representative of Zambia.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): The delegation of Zambia wholeheartedly welcomes this opportunity to exchange our national experiences, as well as to discuss in depth the important subject of public administration and development.

We are thankful for the Secretary-General's reports on the issues as well as his introduction and guidance to this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would also like to commend sincerely the Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) and the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance for having worked hard to prepare for this session.

In the same light, we wish to recognize with deep thanks and appreciation the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and others whose contributions were invaluable in the preparations for this meeting.

In the era of structural reforms in many of our countries, we deem this meeting to be of crucial importance and timely. It is of great importance because often the subject of public administration is not accorded its due weight and consideration in national development efforts. The government administrative machinery is at times seen more as a consumer of scarce fiscal resources rather than as a contributor to national income.

There may be merit in some of these assertions, but this is only correct when the public sector is not well trained; when its size cannot be justified on the output and quality of services offered; or when the policies it delivers run counter to the accumulation of national wealth, efficient delivery of social services or administration of justice.

It should be noted that developing and managing an efficient and productive public sector is expensive, irrespective of good intentions. It is for this reason that the support of the United Nations system and the exchange of national experiences is required.

My delegation would like to share with the Assembly our experience and perspectives on this important subject of public administration and development.

In Zambia we have always viewed public administration as an integral component of our national development efforts. Soon after independence, in 1964, the Government undertook administrative reforms aimed at reorienting the colonial administrative structures towards the priorities of our post-colonial State.

We wanted a new administration focused on meeting the challenges of development and equity. The colonial administrative operations were focused more on the maintenance of law and order, as well as the advancement of the economic and social welfare of a small ruling minority community.

In order to accomplish our development goals, priority was placed on manpower development, decentralization and devolution of authority to provincial and district administrations. These changes led to growth in the size of the public service, as new departments were set up to service the new requirements in the social and economic spheres. Alongside the main government administrative machinery was also a parastatal bureaucracy set up to administer the State enterprises.

During this period my Government received significant support from the international community, and the United Nations as well. Assistance was rendered mainly through manpower training. Scholarships were given to our nationals to study abroad; support was also given to the development of national training institutions.

As a result of this cooperation and our own national efforts, we made significant strides in education and in the provision of health and social services in the 1970s and mid-1980s.

When economic difficulties began to be seriously felt in the late 1980s, it became clear that the existence of a large public sector was a hindrance to economic and social progress. This realization led to a series of attempts to reform the public sector.

Little progress was made, because the bleak economic situation and the bloated public service were integral parts of a one-party political system and a socialist ideology, which also needed to be changed.

The coming to power in our country of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), in 1991, was instrumental in relaunching a much more vigorous public service reform programme. The new Government saw the need for a successful public service reform programme as an absolute necessity and an integral part of a nationwide structural adjustment programme.

The public reforms currently under way are not aimed merely at reducing the numbers of public servants. They are also aimed at creating a lean, efficient, highly motivated and dutiful civil service, based on the job requirements and carefully evaluated professional requirements of each Ministry and public institution.

Our public service reform programme itself requires support, especially towards the payment of retirement packages and the relocation of other retrenches who are still able to work in other productive sectors, such as agriculture.

Assistance is required to develop capacity in science and technology. We require assistance to enable us to manage the transition from a State-dominated economy to an economy that is private sector-driven, an economy in which the Government is merely a regulator and provider of essential social services and public infrastructure.

Zambia is also strengthening other institutions of governance. We have, for example, an independent anti-corruption Commission. Accompanying these reforms was the creation of the Zambia Revenue Authority, aimed at an efficient collection of revenue and at administering a fair tax system, in which the informal sector, too, could make a significant contribution.

My delegation would like to commend the United Nations efforts to lend assistance to developing countries in the areas of public administration and development. The United Nations is relevant and essential for the success of our own efforts.

Delegations will recall that the United Nations has been contributing to the manpower development needs of African countries since their independence days. One of the most significant contributions in this regard, which we would like to cite here, is that of the United Nations Institute for Namibia, which was based in Lusaka, Zambia. We commend the United Nations for that assistance, as well as those countries that assisted in that programme.

We also recognize the role of the United Nations agencies in public administration, in particular, the capacity-building programmes and activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with our Governments. Beyond assisting with public service reforms, UNDP is helping my country in the development of the private sector.

Other agencies of the United Nations system involved in public administration assistance to developing countries ought, in our view, to play a much more visible role.

The current activities could be further improved upon. The way to do this is to involve these agencies in the programme approach currently being used by UNDP and other programmes and funds of the United Nations development system.

Assistance to individual countries, to be effective, should be driven by national priorities. Interventions should be of a strategic nature. Upstream activities should not be overemphasized, as some countries still require real capital project support.

It is our hope that this session is merely setting the stage for further dialogue and cooperation on this important subject of public administration and development.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Members are aware that consultations are still being held on draft resolution A/50/L.69. Pending the outcome of the consultations, the General Assembly may meet tomorrow or at a later date. I urge delegates to consult the *Journal of the United Nations* tomorrow morning to check if a meeting of the General Assembly has been scheduled for either tomorrow morning or afternoon, Friday, 19 April.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.112

General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

112th plenary meeting

Friday, 19 April 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kulla (Albania), Vice- President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Agenda item 12 *(continued)*

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting (A/50/525)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/926)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.69/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly concluded its debate on public administration and development at its 111th plenary meeting, yesterday morning.

In connection with this item, the Assembly has before it a revised draft resolution, circulated in document A/50/L.69/Rev.1.

I call on His Excellency Mr. Messaoud Mansouri, Minister for Administrative Affairs of the Office of the Prime Minister of Morocco, to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.69/Rev.1.

Mr. Mansouri (Morocco) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to speak a second time.

I should like to introduce the revised draft resolution on behalf of the following countries: Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, El Salvador, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo and Zambia.

The draft resolution has been revised as a result of consultations between Morocco and various participants over the past three days. The final language is the result of these efforts. We have tried to make the draft reflect the main views and concerns expressed during this resumed session.

The draft resolution emphasizes the organic relationship between an effective, useful and transparent administration and sustainable economic and social development. The draft also underlines the fundamental role that the United Nations and its specialized agencies can play in the following basic areas: strengthening government capacities for policy development and the restructuring of public administration and its functions; improving performance in the public sector; the creation

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of conditions leading to public-private interaction; supporting governmental efforts to protect nature and the environment; and strengthening the State's legislative and organizational systems.

In order to achieve these objectives, the draft resolution calls on the United Nations to give adequate support to the developing countries, encouraging an exchange of experiences, studies, research and information in all areas of public administration and development, and supports government programmes to update information on experience.

The draft also urges United Nations bodies to give advisory services and technical support to Member States in the area of public administration. So the work of the United Nations may be effective and have a positive impact, the General Assembly also calls on the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to promote coordination of activities of the United Nations system, with a view to greater consistency and coherence.

Given the difficult economic and financial circumstances in most countries of the world, the draft resolution calls on the international community to create an enabling international environment and to mobilize technical, financial and other resources to support special projects to help developing countries and countries in transition, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of public administration.

The draft likewise requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on public administration and development and on measures that can be adopted to implement this draft resolution.

The Kingdom of Morocco, aware of the crucial importance of this draft resolution and of the deeper significance of its recommendations, is determined to take the necessary initiatives to coordinate its action with fraternal African countries and the competent regional agencies, with a view to evaluating the results of this resumed session and to studying ways and means of implementing the spirit and letter of the draft resolution.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the various delegations concerned for enhancing the Moroccan proposal. We commend them for their flexibility and cooperation, which characterized the work of the committee entrusted with consultations to enable the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution by consensus.

In conclusion, I should like to express to all the Secretariat services of the United Nations our appreciation and our gratitude for their support and assistance in facilitating our task and in ensuring the success of this resumed session.

The Acting President: In view of the desire of members to dispose of this item expeditiously, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.60/Rev.1.

In this connection, since the draft resolution has been circulated only this morning, it will be necessary — and I so propose — to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.69/Rev.1, entitled "Public administration and development".

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution Burkina Faso has joined the list of co-sponsors.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.69/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/50/L.69/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 50/225).

The Acting President: Before calling on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Terzi Di Sant'Agata (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union considers that this resumed session of the General Assembly has been a useful exercise. The deliberations in plenary have allowed a constructive exchange of views and experiences. They recognized the strong link between the role of public administration and development challenges and goals such as those agreed upon at United Nations conferences. They emphasized that the improvement of governance and public administration, through increased efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness in government activities based on democracy, the rule of law and human rights, is an essential condition for sustainable, people-centred development.

The European Union is satisfied with the outcome of this resumed session. The European Union wishes to thank the delegation of Morocco for having facilitated the informal consultations on the resolution we have just adopted, which contains important indications about the principles to be respected by Governments and the international community and the need to reassess the role of, and to structure, public administration with a view to contributing to sustainable, people-centred development.

At the same time, the European Union would have hoped that this resolution could have given a clear indication of the importance of establishing and maintaining a legal framework for public and private activities and a fair and reliable judicial system, of reinforcing the links between the public and private sectors, and of encouraging the networking of non-governmental institutions in the field of public administration.

As stated on the first day of this resumed session, the European Union wishes to reiterate its proposal that the Economic and Social Council devote one of its future coordination segments to public administration and development as a cross-sectoral theme.

The European Union wishes that this statement, which should be considered as a statement on the adoption of this resolution, be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.113

General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

113th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 23 April 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/50/888/Add.5)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/50/888/Add.5, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 28 February, 6 March and 3, 11 and 16 April 1996, Honduras has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Request for the reopening of agenda item 44 (The situation in the Middle East)

Letter from Colombia addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/940)

The President: Document A/50/940 contains a letter dated 19 April 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to me.

In his letter, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, transmits to me the decision adopted by the Movement at a meeting of the Coordinating Bureau on 19 April 1996, requesting that a resumed session of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly be convened under agenda item 44 (The situation in the Middle East).

In order for the General Assembly to consider this matter, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 44, entitled "The situation in the Middle East".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 44?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 44?

I see no objection. We will then proceed accordingly.

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Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui.

Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Hraoui (*interpretation from Arabic*): Lebanon thanks the United Nations for responding positively to its request to convene this meeting. We greatly appreciate the convening of the General Assembly at this urgent meeting to discuss the exacerbation of the Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon. The Assembly is shouldering its responsibility towards a country that is being undeservedly penalized.

Allow us to express to you, Sir, and to the Secretary-General our gratitude for the services the United Nations has rendered to humanity in upholding the principles of international legitimacy and for its distinguished role in promoting international solidarity, despite difficult circumstances.

Lebanon has overcome the senseless ordeals imposed on it for over 17 years. We started to rebuild our shattered homeland so that it would become what it once was — a beacon for freedom, democracy, progress and peace. Security has prevailed, and the Lebanese army and legitimate security forces have been deployed in the capital and in other areas. They were about to be deployed to our courageous south so that they could undertake with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which we thank for its sacrifices, the task of consolidating our national sovereignty. The State started revitalizing its institutions and agencies and embarked on enforcing the law and redressing the consequences of the war at the national, economic, social, educational and environmental levels. We launched a successful campaign to combat the spread and cultivation of illegal drugs. Lebanon has won worldwide admiration for its achievements in this field.

We came to the Assembly in 1991. We appealed to it from this very rostrum: "Give us back our usurped rights." We called upon it to cooperate after we had successfully implemented the national reconciliation agreement that was accepted by consensus by the Lebanese in Al-Taif in 1989. This was a document that won Arab and international support, in particular the support of the permanent members of the Security Council.

We called upon the Assembly to cooperate with us in implementing Security Council resolution 425 (1978), referred to in the Al-Taif Agreement, which in turn calls for the spread of the State's authority to the south and the Western Bekaa through its own forces. It was the same resolution that mandated in 1978 the deployment of UNIFIL to guarantee the withdrawal of the Israeli forces to our internationally recognized boundaries.

But Israel was troubled to see Lebanon rise from destruction, start its march on the road to economic recovery and prepare to regain its sovereignty over the Lebanese territories Israel occupies in the south and the Western Bekaa. Israel started to attack Lebanon daily. Then it invaded the south in 1993 and forced Lebanon into a hell of destruction and bloodshed.

We expected the world to help us develop our reconstruction capabilities. Instead, we come to the Assembly today bearing the blood of our innocent people and bearing witness to our hopes and faith that were shattered by Israel: that is, our faith in international legitimacy to recover our rights.

We represent the dignity of a wounded nation whose only sin was that it did not believe in violence and force as a means to deter aggression.

Lebanon was, and will remain, a source of cultural inspiration, a bridge between East and West. Its capital was a learning centre, a resort, a Mecca of sorts for businessmen and tourists from all parts of the world paying homage to its magnificent archaeological, architectural and natural masterpieces.

The Lebanese are missionaries of peace and progress, whether in their country or in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa or Australia. Their achievements bear witness to this. They are known to respect fully the laws of the country in which they live. They contribute to its progress and they distinguish themselves in the fields of medicine, engineering, law, the arts, sciences and literature. Many of them occupy prominent positions in the countries represented here.

What logic could Israel use to justify burning our homeland and killing our people?

How could Israel be allowed to destroy the achievements that took us six years to realize?

How can anyone justify the violation of our peaceful country? Our airspace is violated daily by Israeli fighter jets, and our territorial waters are violated daily by Israeli naval ships that blockade commercial ships entering our ports.

How could the world accept the killing of Lebanese civilians and the displacement, oppression and humiliation of scores of them while the same world hastens, at Sharm El Sheikh, to denounce the explosion of a bus inside Israel?

How could the Israeli people, who were once the victims of Auschwitz, Treblinka and other places, accept that its State massacred more than a hundred men, women and children — all innocent civilians — in Qana, which was once visited by Christ and which was a scene for his miracles? Those innocent civilians took refuge in the UNIFIL base, fleeing the bombardments and the killings. They thought they would be protected under the umbrella of immunity, of international legitimacy.

How could the Israeli people concur with its State's crime of genocide in Nabatiye and many other villages whose people had only their patience and their belief in God and in Lebanon for weapons?

What does the Assembly want Lebanon to become? Does it want it to be the site of mass graves for the world to visit? Would Lebanon say to this world "This is what you did with your own hands? Weren't the mass graves of Jews a testimony to the crimes committed by the Nazis 60 years ago?"

Should Lebanon be continuously violated?

How could Israel destroy the infrastructure and vital foundations of a society? Israel has targeted power plants, destroyed roads and hospitals, demolished homes and villages and forcefully displaced many Lebanese. It bombarded archaeological sites that were classified by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as part of the international heritage of mankind. It blockaded roads between the villages of the south and the rest of the homeland and obstructed the delivery of food and medical assistance to the needy and the wounded. The south was turned into a wasteland.

Why commit the most heinous crimes against a country which has always been an advocate for peace, a just peace?

We would have wanted the Assembly to talk about Lebanon as a political, economic and cultural haven in the Middle East. Does Israel want peace with our country? Is it forbidden that our country rise from its ashes? By what logic are we deprived of the right to uphold our sovereignty and our territorial integrity while Israel has the right to acquire nuclear weapons and refuses to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)? Does Israel want Lebanon to choose between the total destruction of its infrastructure, an undermining of its capabilities and its sovereignty, or surrendering completely to its occupation by giving up its right to live in dignity on it soil?

Despite the Israeli shelling, the Lebanese remain united and stand together defending their homeland and their right to sovereignty. International support was a further incentive to our steadfastness.

We participated in the Madrid conference on the basis of the implementation of international resolutions, foremost among which is Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Our participation was based on the letters of guarantee given by the American Administration to implement that resolution. We entered the Madrid conference in solidarity with our Arab brethren, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace. We were guided by Lebanon's commitment to facilitate any international effort for the realization of a comprehensive, just and permanent peace in the Middle East.

Lebanon and Israel held more than 10 rounds of negotiations without realizing any positive progress. Israel overburdened the negotiations with its manoeuvres and by asking for the impossible.

How can it be accepted that this Organization enforces Security Council resolutions in the Middle East against a country that challenged international will, while the international resolution in favour of Lebanon, a country which has never been an aggressor, remains unimplemented? Israel, it must be recalled, has persistently challenged this resolution ever since 1978 by its continued occupation of cherished parts of our land and by its continued aggression.

We did not come to the highest authority representing the conscience of mankind, and to the General Assembly, which is entrusted with the implementation of international legitimacy and respect for human rights, merely to speak and have our words go unheeded. We did not come to the United Nations to cry or to lament. We came here in the hope that we shall all stand firmly and decisively together against aggression and transgression, against the heinous crimes that go unpunished. Israeli aggression against Lebanon is proof that the international legitimacy about which the civilized, free world brags has failed to put an end to war and transgression.

Lebanon is a founding Member of the United Nations. It is also a founding member of the League of Arab States. Lebanon participated in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In these organizations and in all other international forums, Lebanon has persistently been an advocate for the liberation of peoples and for the principles of democracy and peace. Lebanon is for a comprehensive and just peace. We in Lebanon are against gunboat peace. The Israeli crimes will not force us to give up our rights. Israel will not make us renege on our commitment to a just and comprehensive peace. Do these Israeli practices represent an Israeli call for peace? Is this the way we educate younger generations about the principle of peace?

Lebanon is calling for the following:

> First, that Israel be condemned/and punished for the crimes committed against the Lebanese, their institutions and sovereignty, and against humanity. I should recall that, in addition to the number of martyrs killed among the ranks of the Lebanese army and security forces, the number of civilians killed totals 175, 109 of whom were killed in the Qana massacre. There were more that a thousand injuries, and more than 400 people are still being treated in hospitals. The number of those forcibly displaced from their land and homes has reached 500,000.
>
> Secondly, the implementation, forthwith, of resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israel from the territories that it occupies in the south and western Bekaa valley to the internationally recognized boundaries. I will repeat what I said from this rostrum in 1991. Our security forces will immediately assume responsibility for security in that area. We have repeatedly declared that as soon as Israel withdraws the Lebanese State will guarantee security in this region.
>
> Thirdly, redress for Lebanon for the losses resulting from the damage sustained due to Israeli aggression. Allow me to demand justice. Ad hoc committees have been established for the preliminary evaluation of the damage, which is thought to exceed hundreds of millions of dollars.

We would be remiss if we failed to express from this rostrum our appreciation to our friends and brothers for their sympathy and support during the ordeal that my country has suffered as a result of the Israeli actions.

For over 17 years, Lebanon has paid the price for other peoples' wars fought on our land. What logic can force Lebanon to pay the price for a peace sought by others?

This Organization is being put to the test. Our wounded people look up to it, as do history and the future. This is a test of international credibility: whether to defend the will of international peace or succumb to the whims of aggression. This is a test for the conscience of our era. Humanity can either step into the twenty-first century more confident of the role of international legitimacy, or it can slip into an era of impunity and barbarism, which would be regrettable. May God help us to avoid such a catastrophe.

Lebanon looks forward to a responsible political era in which all cooperate to promote human progress on the basis of justice and respect for the rights of others to prosper in security, and on the basis of an enhanced confidence in the role of the United Nations in promoting international stability.

Innocent civilians are being killed in Lebanon. They beseech representatives in every corner of this Organization; their outcry should awaken the conscience of peace- and justice-loving States. Where is the right? How banal are the political attempts to outwit, when what is at stake is a homeland, destroyed and a people suppressed by injustice and aggression? Let politics raise itself to a level worthy of man.

I left Lebanon as the bells of the churches were ringing in mourning and the minarets of mosques, draped in black, called people to prayers. I arrived in New York, where the United Nations from its Headquarters defends the rights of peoples, particularly those of small

States. I arrived in New York and saw the Statue of Liberty in the harbour. My country, like this Statue, beseeches the Assembly to restore our usurped rights.

In the face of the logic of force, we shall for ever raise the banner of right.

In the face of the tyranny of aggression, we shall for ever raise the torch of justice.

In the face of the violation of our homeland, we shall for ever seek international legitimacy.

In the face of aggression and killing, we shall for ever uphold our firm belief in life and in the individual.

Lebanon shall never die. Lebanon shall for ever raise the banner of justice and peace.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Lebanese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): Today in Israel is Yom Hazikaron, our day of memorial for those in the Israel Defense Forces who have fallen while defending the State of Israel as well as for Israelis killed over the years by murderous terrorist attacks. Today we remember our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, who gave their lives so that we could live ours in freedom. With tears and with undying gratitude, we cherish their memory and salute their sacrifice.

But today in Israel our pain is doubled. Once again we have been forced into a fight with those who seek our destruction as well as the derailment of the chances for peace. And once again we are forced to resort to fighting as a last option.

I ask: "Who among you would agree to the existence of an armed militia operating from within your territory, beyond the scope of your Government's authority, carrying out attacks against other States? Who among you would allow your citizens to be attacked and killed by terrorists? Who among you would choose not to exercise the right of self-defence?"

Since 1 February this year, Hezbollah Islamic fundamentalist terrorists have stepped up their attacks against Israel, firing wave after wave of Katyusha rockets from their bases in Lebanon at towns and villages in northern Israel. They have unilaterally breached the agreements brokered by the United States in 1993.

Israel's primary obligation is to protect the security of its citizens. Security must be ensured in order to enhance the peace process. This right of self-defence is basic and elementary. We will not allow our civilian population centres to be held hostage by Hezbollah. I listened very carefully to the address made by the President of Lebanon, but, unfortunately, the Lebanese Government has neither the ability nor the will to control Hezbollah activities. Therefore, unfortunately, Israel must do it alone.

Our objective is to restore a sense of security to all our citizens. Israelis living in the north must be free of the threat of shelling and free from tension and fear. This is our duty and we will fulfil it. We are not ready again to be the victims that were mentioned by the President of Lebanon just a few minutes ago.

Thus, after a long period of restraint and the exhaustion of all political and diplomatic means, the Israel Defense Forces began hitting back at Hezbollah strongholds throughout Lebanon, intentionally avoiding sending ground troops. The goal of this operation is simple: to create a situation where the Hezbollah will not be in a position to renew its terrorist attacks against northern Israel.

The Government of Israel does not need to prove its desire for peace with its neighbours. Our activities in Lebanon do not contradict our pursuit of peace. On the contrary, they were undertaken in order to save the peace from the hands of those who vow to destroy it. As the Prime Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, has stated, "This is not an operation of choice, but rather one of no alternative."

Israel has no territorial claim on Lebanon. And we have no intention to enter into battles with either the Syrian or the Lebanese armies. But we have the right and obligation to defend our people.

The Lebanese Government was told time and again: "Control the Hezbollah. If you are, as you claim, the sovereign Government of Lebanon, then this is your obligation." It is deplorable that the Lebanese Government disarmed all the militias which had operated within its territory, but never Hezbollah, which is supported by a very forceful Power beyond Lebanon.

The Syrian Government was told time and again: "You control a large part of Lebanon. Use your influence to stop the terrorists."

I would like to read from an article by Daniel Pipes on this matter, which appeared in today's edition of *The New York Times*:

> "Mr. Assad provides considerable aid and has the clout to veto a planned attack on Israel or give it his blessing. He does control Hezbollah, the guerrilla group that has launched the rockets against Israel. It is based in Lebanon, which Mr. Assad has effectively ruled since 1990."

Israel waited for the Governments of Syria and Lebanon to respond, and gave ample time for diplomatic efforts, but to no avail. The Government of Israel was criticized for its restraint while Hezbollah continued to carry out attacks against Israeli civilians with impunity. The time has come to take action ourselves.

Israel's intention has never been, nor will it ever be, to hurt innocent civilians or hit peaceful civilian areas. Operations in Lebanon are being conducted solely against Hezbollah terrorist targets. Unfortunately, Hezbollah's intentions are precisely the opposite. Hezbollah situated its positions in the midst of civilian population centres throughout Lebanon. As a result of its cynical use of Lebanese villages and civilians as bases and shields for its terrorist activities against Israel, innocent Lebanese have been hurt.

Hezbollah is using the same tactics with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) units, firing Katyusha rockets from positions close to UNIFIL bases. We deeply deplore the loss of life of innocent people who perished in these hostile activities and who were unrelated to those fanatic terrorists. But, as indicated by the spokesman of the United Nations, last week's tragedy in Qana was caused because the Hezbollah launched Katyusha rockets at Israel from locations a short distance away from the United Nations position, where innocent civilians had taken shelter.

The continued suffering of the people of Lebanon is entirely the responsibility of terrorist organizations, — first and foremost the Hezbollah. We send our sincere condolences to the families, and our hopes and wishes for a quick recovery to the wounded civilians and UNIFIL soldiers.

Over the last week, Hezbollah launched over 520 Katyusha rockets at civilian centres in northern Israel. Fifty-five people have been injured and over 12,000 have been forced out of their homes. Many are still living in shelters. The Hezbollah Katyusha attacks, like the attacks by Hamas suicide bombers, are designed not only to kill people and to inflict terror, but to destroy the Middle East peace process.

Today, there are two trends emerging in the Middle East: one which seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and another, inspired and supported by Iran, which is trying to kill the prospects for peace. A minority of radicals attempts to impose its will on the majority, on the coalition for peace. A minority of terror — in Lebanon, in Egypt, in Gaza and in the West Bank — attempts to prevent peace and security, mutual respect and tolerance.

While peacemakers meet and sign treaties and create a new reality, the Hezbollah, the Hamas, the Islamic Jihah and their Iranian master seek to pull us back to the old Middle East, where violence and bloodshed were the order of the day.

Make no mistake. The stated goal of the Hezbollah is not the removal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, but the outright destruction of Israel. Last month, Hezbollah Vice-Chairman Nasseem Kassem stated:

> "We oppose and will continue to oppose the Zionist entity ... Israel has no reason to exist and will not exist."

Hezbollah annually receives $70 million in financial aid from Iran. Hezbollah terrorists are trained in Iranian military installations, and so-called Iranian Revolutionary Guards are stationed in Lebanon.

I wish to inform all those present that the sinister intentions of the Hezbollah go beyond Israel. It wishes to dismantle the Lebanese State and replace it with an Islamic one based on the Iranian model. Hezbollah counts the Government of Lebanon, the United States, peace-seeking Arab Governments and above all, Israel, as its avowed enemies. The means it employs to reach its unholy ends are jihad and suicidal murder. We must all band together to defeat this scourge, which threatens our hope for a better future.

Israel welcomes the political efforts designed to restore stability to the region, to return a sense of normalcy to northern Israel and to Lebanon and to help advance the peace process. We have complete faith in the efforts and expertise of the United States Government to return calm to the region and in the goodwill of other countries as well. We are ready to agree to a cease-fire if the other party is ready to agree to a permanent cease-fire as well, immediately.

Israel is willing to accept Security Council resolution 425 (1978) only within the framework of an overall peace settlement.

Allow me to quote from the address of Prime Minister Peres to Israel's Knesset — the Israeli Parliament — two days ago:

> "I again call on the Lebanese Government to conduct negotiations for a peace treaty with Israel, which will be based on its territorial integrity, on its full sovereignty over all parts of its country, on rooting out any armed terrorist presence from its land, and on arrangements which will insure security and peace on both sides of the border ...
>
> "Peace between Israel and Lebanon is natural and essential, and is possible without any difficulty, if and when Lebanon again becomes a truly free and sovereign State. There is no real conflict between our two nations."

This, we hope, will put an end to the situation that forced Israel to retaliate and to use its right of self-defence against those who attacked innocent civilians — men, women and children — in many villages and towns throughout northern Israel.

This is necessary to clear the way for the resumption of the peace process in the Middle East.

I believe that this is the hope and obligation of the majority of nations gathered here today.

It is incumbent on this body to adopt resolutions that will help, not hinder, the peace process and the peace-seeking peoples of the Middle East.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is my honour, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, and as Chairman of the Arab Group for this month, to extend to you, Mr. President, our thanks and appreciation for holding this special meeting during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The convening of this meeting is ample evidence of the rejection by the international community of the continued Israeli aggression against the Republic of Lebanon. This aggression, which threatens regional and international peace and security, and undermines the current peace process in the area, is, by any definition, a violation of the simplest and most basic rules of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant international resolutions, human rights, and particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Our disappointment and that of the international community is compounded by the intransigence shown by the Israeli Government and its escalating aggression: its continued shelling, by air, sea and land of brotherly Lebanon, resulting in the killing and displacement of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians and the continued destruction of development institutions, housing areas, power and water stations, and historic, cultural and archaeological sites.

This aggression, which has not spared the main highways and routes leading to cities and villages in the south, is also being committed against food and relief convoys and against certain United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) sites in Lebanon, which led to the killing of some Blue Helmets, in spite of the appeals and diplomatic efforts made at all levels. This occurred in spite of the most recent Security Council resolution, which Israel has ignored, as it has done all other resolutions.

This aggressive behaviour is not in consonance with the requirements of the situation and the direction currently being taken by the countries of the region, which call for solving disputes on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and international law in order to achieve a just and lasting peace.

The Assembly has heard a statement by His Excellency the President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hraoui, who spoke in detail of the Israeli aggression against his country, of the destruction wrought and of the killing and displacement of thousands of innocent civilians, in spite of all the diplomatic efforts to stop the aggression. This compounds the concern felt by my country and other Arab and friendly countries over Israel's aggression, defiance and continued attacks, as regards not only Lebanon and its people, but all the countries and peoples of the area and the international community as a whole.

The present conduct of the Israeli Government in launching an all-out aggressive war against Lebanon, a Member State of this Organization, under the pretext of protecting its security, requires that the international community work to force the Israeli Government to comply with the resolutions of international legality and their provisions, particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls upon Israel to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory and to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries.

This situation could fuel the fire of extremism and violence in the area and throughout the world. It could threaten the peace process, which is only four years old. The Israeli Government, during these years, has adopted a policy of prevarication and stalling, ignoring its international and regional commitments *vis-à-vis* these negotiations. It tried to impose unfair conditions, which led to blocking the Lebanese track of the negotiations, because it wanted only to continue occupying the Lebanese and other Arab territories.

The question of security is a fair and genuine concern of all countries, particularly in view of Israeli's threats and the criminal acts it has committed. This should become one of the priorities of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, which is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

The countries of the international community are called upon to shoulder their full responsibility to deter Israel's aggression against Lebanon by adopting resolutions condemning it and by taking immediate measures to stop it, to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory and to force the Israeli Government to make restitution for the destruction caused by its aggression against the economic and social development structures of Lebanon. The international community is called upon also to condemn the inhuman acts and the butchery committed by the Israeli occupying Power, which has claimed the lives of dozens of innocent civilians — women, children and the elderly.

Israel, as the occupying Power, must act on, and fully respect, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and implement its provisions, as well as those of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, particularly resolution 425 (1978). Israel must immediately and unconditionally withdraw its military forces from Lebanese territory. This would be in accord with the new international trend to contain and lessen tensions and to bolster the peace process in the Middle East, which cannot be comprehensive or just in view of this haemorrhage — the killing of innocent civilians and the displacement of more than 500,000 Lebanese, under the pretext of securing the borders of Israel and quelling the Lebanese resistance.

Lebanon has a right to resist and to extend its sovereignty to all areas of its territory, including its south, which has been occupied for three decades. This right is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and resolutions of international significance, particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

It is time for Israel to realize that Lebanese resistance will not stop until Israel completely withdraws from the occupied Lebanese territories, implements the provisions of all the relevant resolutions and returns to negotiations as the only way to settle the Lebanese question.

The recent events in Lebanon have proved that resorting to force and aggression and violating the rights of others cannot lead to a solution of disputes or guarantee the security and stability of our region.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the complete solidarity of the Arab peoples and countries with brotherly Lebanon in its struggle. Lebanon stood up courageously to the aggression and criminal acts of Israel, which targeted its development and socio-economic structures. We appeal to all countries, development organizations and international financial institutions to extend urgently every possible assistance — particularly humanitarian assistance — to help Lebanon heal its wounds.

Mr. Allagany (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today the General Assembly is resuming its fiftieth session, for the second time, to consider the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East". During this session we have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, an Organization which enshrines the hopes of the international community and the principles and foundations on which this Organization is based.

This session has been resumed at the request of the sister Lebanese Republic. We have just heard a statement by its President, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, who has described the tragedy of Lebanon following the shameful aggression by Israel.

I would like first to express the admiration of the people and Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Lebanese people's resistance.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomed the Lebanese during the Taif Agreement negotiations. Now Saudi Arabia considers that Lebanon's current trial has proved the resolute attitude of its Government and the solidarity of its people. In fact, the strength of the Government of Lebanon and the solidarity its people have enabled them to rise to the Israeli challenge.

On the fifth day of a second week the Israeli military operation "Grapes of Wrath" continues in Lebanon. Day after day it is taking an increasing toll of victims among women, children and innocent civilians, and even among the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Israeli war machine continues to use every military method: artillery, shelling and air raids. Yesterday 240-millimetre mortars exploded in 26 Lebanese villages.

With the death of Mohammed Dib, a four-year-old child, at a hospital in southern Lebanon, the number of those killed in the Qana massacre has risen to 102 innocent victims. We are amazed that such a frightful massacre should have taken place in a village such as Qana, which, in addition to being the base of the Fijian battalion under the United Nations flag, was a place where women, children and elderly persons had taken refuge. In just a few seconds Israeli shells turned that village into a furnace comparable to the Nazi crematoria of the Second World War. The victims fell to what was euphemistically described as a surgical strike.

Before the eyes of the international community, the broken heads of children rolled on the ground. We all saw on our television screens hospital doctors referring to "Child A", "Child B", "Child C" or "The child from the helicopter", because the children had lost their families. Victims were brought to the hospitals severely wounded, and many died as a result of their injuries. When Hassan El Abid returns to Lebanon after performing Hajj, no member of his family will be there to welcome him. An Israeli strike demolished his house, killing the mother of his children and seven of his nine children, including a newborn only four days old. Whole families perished under their collapsing homes in fractions of a second; Hassan El Abid's family was among the hundreds of victims of the aggression.

Forty shells per second are falling on Lebanese villages. The Israeli military command continues to threaten the inhabitants of southern villages, telling them to evacuate. The warning issued to them states:

> "All persons still in these villages should leave them immediately because the Israeli army is going to resume the intensive shelling of these areas. All persons who decide to stay put their lives at risk."

In less than two weeks more than 31,000 missiles and shells have been fired at Lebanon. On average 2,000 air raids per day have been carried out, aimed at destroying the Lebanese infrastructure; 80 per cent of electrical power stations have been destroyed. It had cost Lebanon millions of dollars to rebuild them after the civil war. Repairing them will take two full years. Preliminary estimates indicate that the cost will be about $300 million.

The naval blockade continues off the coast of Lebanon, and Israeli ships continue to bombard the coast, cutting off the south from Beirut and preventing the distribution of emergency humanitarian assistance and supplies to the victims in the south. This blockade has affected all Lebanese without exception; they are all suffering from grave hardships — grave shortages of basic foodstuffs and other supplies.

The international community remains silent when faced with these crimes committed on Lebanese soil. I was shocked to hear the comment of one Western journalist on television regarding this massacre: "If what happened in Lebanon had happened in a Western country, we would have called it 'ethnic cleansing'". These words are corroborated by a member of the Fijian battalion of UNIFIL, who said: "What I saw today is similar to what I saw in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

Saudi Arabia believes that constant pressure is being put on Lebanon by naval and air bombardments. Enormous damage has been caused and many innocent civilian lives have been lost. I can only express the concern of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over the air raids, because they constitute a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, and defy international law as expressed in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which demands that Israel unconditionally withdraw from Lebanese territory.

Saudi Arabia considers that these raids can only lead to further tension and violence in the region at a time when we are hoping that a just, lasting and global peace can spread throughout the region. Saudi Arabia wishes to reaffirm its support for Lebanon in defending its territory and protecting the security and safety of its citizens. Lebanon cannot be held responsible for what is happening in the south. I specifically refer to resistance to Israeli occupation in that region until the Lebanese army is allowed to extend its authority in that part of the country so that Lebanon can exercise sovereignty over all its territory.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has supported the peace process since it began in 1991 in Madrid. We have encouraged the bilateral negotiations between the Arabs and Israelis. We have also, through various delegations, participated in the committee that emerged from the multilateral discussions. This meaningful participation by Saudi Arabia is evidence of our commitment to the attainment of just and lasting peace in the region. But what is happening today in Lebanon makes us question the sincerity, and even the intentions, of the Israeli authorities as regards the peace process. What peace can be built on the bodies of Lebanese children?

His Excellency the President of the Lebanese Republic stated a few days ago that all of Lebanon was against a peace achieved through bloodshed. We feel that anyone with a conscience is against a peace achieved through bloodshed. The damage done to the Lebanese infrastructure by Israel in order to slow down its process of reconstruction creates an extremely grave situation. It is Israel which is placing pitfalls in the way of peace. I am talking not only about the Lebanese-Syrian talks, but also about the occupied territories.

This is against the spirit and the letter of the peace agreements. Crimes against innocent Lebanese civilians — women and children — are a challenge to civilization, international law and morality. We are waiting today for the sponsors of the peace conference to put pressure on Israel to pledge to place no more obstacles in the way of peace, to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and withdraw unconditionally from southern Lebanon as a step towards a just and lasting peace.

The Almighty said in his Koran:

"On that account: we ordained

For the Children of israel

That if any one slew

A person — unless it be

For murder or for spreading

Mischief in the land —

It would be as if

He slew the whole people:

And if any one saved a life,

It would be as if he saved

The life of the whole people." *(The Holy Koran, V:35)*

Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Once again the world is witnessing a horrible massacre being committed by the Israeli aggressors against the Lebanese people. The Israeli navy has imposed a tight blockade against the port of Beirut, while its artillery and air force have been shelling and bombing Lebanese towns and villages, killing hundreds, injuring thousands and displacing more than half a million persons. The aggression, in which they have used various elements of their military machine, has caused grave material losses. This is not only an aggression reflecting deep hatred and brutality, but also another example of the terrorist acts that the Israelis have been perpetrating throughout half a century against both the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples.

The Israelis have claimed that their military operations against Lebanon are carried out in self-defence. This claim is just as false as that of the Israeli media in covering up the terrorist acts with flimsy pretexts, such as the pursuit of Hezbollah elements. The Israelis' acts themselves reveal the falsehood of their claims and prove that the objective of these criminal military operations was decided in advance: to destroy Lebanon, put an end to patriotic resistance and terrorize the people and Government of Lebanon.

If that is not the true objective of the Israeli aggression, why were shells aimed in such a manner as to result in the dismemberment of babies, women and the elderly everywhere? Are these vulnerable people among the elements of Hezbollah? Is that why they are being assassinated in this horrendous manner? Have farms, food factories and power stations suddenly become Hezbollah bases, to be destroyed? How can the shelling of ambulances carrying pregnant women and injured children be interpreted? Have the refugees who sought shelter in United Nations camps suddenly become members of Hezbollah, to be pursued by Israeli bombs in a massacre reminiscent of the crimes of the Israeli terrorists at the Bahr el Baqar school, Sabra and Shattila and the massacre at the Al-Ibrahimi mosque?

The Israeli clique has violated Lebanon's sovereignty, and by its actions is threatening Lebanon's unity and territorial integrity. Moreover, the acts of violence and revenge which characterize the conduct of the Israeli military constitute a threat to international security.

Regrettably, the Security Council, which is supposed to be the main body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, has been remiss in addressing the deteriorating situation. When it was finally forced to intervene, it was exposed. Instead of assuming its responsibilities under Chapter VII of the Charter and adopting a resolution condemning the aggression and forcing the aggressor to bear the consequences of its actions, it had to retreat under the pressures and manoeuvres of one permanent member and adopt a weak and unjust resolution equating the criminal with the victim and those who were defending their homes with those who demolished these homes.

Security Council resolution 1052 (1996) contains specific measures for the Israelis to implement, including a cease-fire. However, events that have taken place in the region since the adoption of this resolution clearly show that the Israelis have flouted it as usual, pursuing their terrorism by demolishing houses and killing their residents, arresting hundreds of people and persisting in their blockade of towns and villages. They have even expanded and escalated their aggression. There is no doubt that the Israelis will not implement the demands of the Security Council, encouraged in their intransigence and bullying by the limitless support they receive from a permanent member of the Security Council, a member which does not limit its support to providing them with the most destructive weapons, but also protects them against any condemnation of their aggression or punishment for the perpetuation of their occupation.

This shows the extent of that country's use of double standards. At a time when it has been showing keen interest in the implementation of Security Council resolutions that address other matters with extreme cruelty, including the imposition of cruel sanctions under Chapter VII, it has been preventing the Council from condemning the most vicious and barbaric crimes, such as that perpetrated against the Qana camp. It views such crimes as undeserving of condemnation, since the perpetrators are the Israelis whom it defends and protects. It justifies their crimes even when they include the crushing of children's skulls or the dismemberment of old men under the eyes and within hailing distance of a United Nations encampment.

As I stand before the Assembly today, I am reminded of an aggression committed against my country, whose tenth anniversary falls this month. Faced with the inability of the Security Council even to condemn that barbaric American aggression, which targeted the leader of the Libyan revolution and killed his adopted daughter and several other people in Tripoli and Benghazi, the Jamahiriya had to resort to this Assembly, which adopted resolution 41/38 condemning the United States of America for its treacherous aggression against the Libyan people and affirming the right of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to receive appropriate compensation for the material and human losses inflicted upon it. Today, Lebanon, which is being subjected to premeditated aggression, has also had to resort to the General Assembly following the Security Council's failure to adopt a serious and decisive resolution.

The General Assembly has just heard an address by the President of Lebanon in which he reviewed events in Lebanon, including the murder and displacement of its people and the destruction inflicted upon its infrastructure. What sisterly Lebanon has been subjected to is a brutal aggression and a threat to peace and security, not only in Lebanon but in the Middle East as a whole. To avert any further adverse effects of the prevailing situation, this Assembly, which represents the true will of the international community, is called upon to condemn the aggressor and make it bear the consequences of its aggression, including compensation to Lebanon for all the human and material losses it has suffered. This Assembly is also called upon to put an end to Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, occupation that has been rejected by the entire world and is the subject of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

In the face of the Security Council's silence and hesitation over taking any effective measures against the oppressive Israeli practices, this Assembly and the international community as a whole are called upon to draw the attention of the Israelis and their ally, a permanent member of the Security Council, to this situation. They should be warned that the vicious aggression against Lebanon and the humiliating tactics used by the Israelis in dealing with the Palestinians in the occupied territories will not serve security or establish any peace, but will instead push Arabs to the brink of despair, which could lead to unpredictable consequences and dangers.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I wish at the outset to welcome to the General Assembly the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, and to thank him for his important address.

The General Assembly is holding a formal meeting today to consider the situation in Lebanon, reflecting the importance and seriousness of that situation. It also shows the great concern of the international community over the question of Lebanon. We believe that this meeting is extremely important and ample evidence of the international community's hope that all hostilities will cease forthwith and that a cease-fire will be implemented in the region so that further deaths of innocent civilians can be avoided and the peace process can continue without hindrance.

In the past few days, Israel has launched large-scale military attacks against southern Lebanon that have resulted in large numbers of casualties among innocent civilians and of displaced persons and refugees. It has also led to further escalation of the situation and to rising tensions in Lebanon.

The Chinese delegation expresses its deep concern over the situation. We strongly condemn all violations of international law and of the United Nations Charter. We urge all the parties concerned to exercise restraint, cease all hostilities forthwith and establish a cease-fire so as to ease tensions and contribute to the peace and stability in the region. We believe that Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized boundaries should be fully respected. All relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 425 (1978), should be implemented.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should meet with no obstacle in carrying out its functions. The safety, security and freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel should be guaranteed by all parties concerned.

We urge the international community, including other agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, to provide the innocent civilians of Lebanon with urgent humanitarian assistance to alleviate their suffering.

China is opposed to terrorism in all its manifestations. We believe that terrorism poses a threat not only to the safety and security of the people of the country concerned, but to the peace and security of the international community. We believe that, as with other international issues, combating terrorism is necessary if the norms of international relations and international law are to be followed, and particularly if the sovereignty, security and fundamental interests of other countries are not to be jeopardized.

We believe that the sovereignty and security of all countries in the Middle East, including Israel, should be respected and guaranteed. Terrorism should by no means be associated with Arab countries and Arab peoples. Nor should anyone, under the pretext of combating terrorism, take any indiscriminate actions incurring the suffering of innocent civilians.

Harmony and peace in the Middle East should be highly treasured by all the parties concerned. We appreciate the diplomatic efforts of all countries concerned to alleviate the situation. At the present delicate and important stage we hope that all the parties concerned will take no actions which might further aggravate the conflict or jeopardize the peace process in the Middle East. We hope that all sides will remain reasonable and encourage all positive efforts conducive to alleviating the tense situation there, efforts including dialogue, consultation and negotiation, so as to create conditions for an early, comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The General Assembly is meeting today in tragic and sad circumstances. Israeli aggression against Lebanon is continuing, without mercy, for the 13th day in a row. Despite the world conscience and the denunciation of the butchery committed by the Israeli forces in Qana, which claimed more than 100 lives and wounded more than 100 people, including innocent women, children and elderly people, Israel still continues its attacks by air, sea and land. These attacks against the economic infrastructure, power plants and reservoirs, have resulted in paralysing normal life in the south of the country and displacing hundreds of thousands of Lebanese people from their towns and villages to the capital, Beirut, and its suburbs.

In spite of all those events, the Security Council was silent for several days, behaving as if it were not much concerned. The Council, which is capable of meeting at midnight to discuss the least important issue, or of making the most crucial decisions within hours, stalled and prevaricated when Israel was using its military supermachine to inflict enormous damage on Lebanon, which was barely recovering after a long and painful period of suffering.

When the Security Council found itself obliged to act after the massacre at Qana, its decision was very weak, equating aggressor and victim, occupier and occupied. Indeed, the Security Council's request for an end to hostilities was conditional on the success of current diplomatic efforts to achieve that objective. Israeli aggression therefore continued, which is exactly why the General Assembly is meeting — to express the feelings of the international community and to adopt a just resolution that will restore some credibility and balance to this international Organization, and restore security and stability to Lebanon.

Lebanese resistance, which Israel is seeking to quell, did not come out of a vacuum. It was a direct reaction to the occupation by Israeli forces of certain Lebanese territories, and the continuation of that occupation until today. Ending Lebanese resistance activities, therefore, would require the evacuation and departure of Israeli forces from the occupied Lebanese strip. The Security Council affirmed that fact in resolution 425 (1978), which Israel still completely disregards.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The General Assembly is called up today to adopt a resolution condemning Israeli aggression and reaffirming the cease-fire and the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the complete withdrawal of Israel from the Lebanese territories. This is the right action to take, and the right way to breathe life again into the peace process, which has almost become the victim of the blatant Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

The Republic of Yemen, while expressing its full solidarity with the Lebanese people and Government, calls upon the General Assembly to assume its responsibility, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): The United States joined the other 14 members of the Security Council last week in calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties, support for ongoing diplomatic efforts, concern for the safety and security of civilians, and humanitarian and reconstruction aid for Lebanon. The United States Government wholeheartedly supports these calls. We are driven by a deep compassion for the people on both sides of the border who have suffered the loss of loved ones, who have suffered casualties, or who have endured displacement and property loss. We are moved by the plight of the people — whether Lebanese or Israeli — caught in this tragedy. We are trying to help. The United States has pledged an emergency grant of $1 million and the provision of medical supplies and equipment until we assess what more we can do.

We are also engaged in extensive diplomatic efforts. President Clinton is resolved to help the parties try to reach an agreement to bring an end to this tragedy. At his direction, the Secretary of State and his team are in the region, intensively engaged in talks with the parties. He is trying to get a cease-fire in Lebanon and along Israel's northern border and an enduring set of understandings that will provide security to civilians on both sides of the border.

This is a time for nations around the world to renew the call for peace. It is not a time to engage in rhetoric that favours one side or the other. Such rhetoric does not advance the cause of peace. It does not bring closer the day when civilians are safe. On the contrary, it only diverts attention from the acts of terrorists who have exploited the complex situation in south Lebanon to target Israeli civilians and obstruct the peace process. If we care about security and about the ability of people in the region to live normal lives, we cannot allow these violent extremists to succeed.

We have witnessed dramatic successes in the peace process during the past five years. We must do all we can to re-establish the conditions that will facilitate further progress in negotiations toward a comprehensive peace. This Assembly should rededicate itself to that task.

If a draft resolution is introduced on this topic, I would add a word of caution. The text that I have seen in circulation does not advance the cause we all support. It is one-sided in context, fails to recognize the complexity of the situation and is likely to further exacerbate the problem. I would vote against such a draft resolution. I would have hoped that this General Assembly could have endorsed the action of the Security Council in its adoption of resolution 1052 (1996), without embroidery. We could then stand ready with all Member States to do just that.

But should this Assembly adopt a different draft resolution, I feel it incumbent on me to point out that its consequence will be a divided house — a United Nations speaking with two voices and with no clear direction. The Charter itself envisioned such a situation and sought to avoid it with Article 12. But beyond this important point is my concern with the resulting message of division. Such a signal is all the more troubling because I know all of us share common views on the essential points: the need for an end to the violence and bloodshed and a return to the peace process.

This view should not be misinterpreted. My Government will do all it can to bring about a settlement. My Government will remain committed to the territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence and unity of Lebanon. But expressing principles does not always bring results. We must each find ways to contribute tangibly to the march of peace and to the efforts to combat terrorists who would destroy or distract it.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following Member States, which are associated with the European Union, have expressed their intention to join in the statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The European Union is seriously concerned by the aggravation of the situation in Lebanon and northern Israel. It renews its appeal for an immediate cease-fire and, in this context, supports Security Council resolution 1052 (1996). It considers that only a political solution can bring an end to the current crisis and allow the peace process to resume its course. It considers that the populations of Israel and Lebanon must be able to live in peace and security. The European Union deeply deplores the suffering inflicted on the civilian populations of both countries, in particular the tragedy at Qana, and the loss of human lives, which continues to increase. Equally, it deeply deplores the attacks on Israel.

Current events also risk compromising the peace process and stability in the Middle East. The European Union insists that all the parties, whether directly or indirectly involved in the current conflict, should contribute to an immediate halt to hostilities and acts of violence, with the aim of allowing peace negotiations to resume.

The European Union reaffirms its support for all the parties involved in peace negotiations. It confirms its willingness to contribute actively to the search in progress for an immediate halt to hostilities and a lasting peace in the region. In this regard, it supports the actions taken by the Presidency, the Troika and member States, notably France, which have been in the region or have made representations in recent days. It supports all the efforts, notably those of the United States of America, currently being made with the same purpose. The aim of these efforts must be to obtain, with an immediate halt to hostilities and acts of violence, the elaboration of a lasting agreement between the parties which would not prejudice a global agreement between Israel and Lebanon in the context of the peace process. This agreement must contribute towards guaranteeing Israel's security and preserving Lebanon's sovereignty, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), to which the European Union remains committed.

The European Union expresses its support for the continuing efforts of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in extremely adverse circumstances, including serious injuries to four Fijian peace-keepers at Qana, to try to alleviate the effects of the current violence and ensure the safety of the civilian population. The European Union also reiterates its appeal to all concerned to respect the safety, security and freedom of movement of UNIFIL, so that it can effectively carry out its mandate.

Lebanon, which for some years has been courageously engaged in reconstruction, must be able to find, once again, the peace to which it, like its neighbour, has a right. The European Union will continue to provide assistance so that Lebanon can take its rightful place in the Middle East in peace and prosperity. In this regard, the European Union will pursue its support for Lebanon's reconstruction and development, particularly in the field of energy. It declares itself ready to increase significantly the substantial humanitarian contribution which it is already making, by means of national contributions, to relieve the suffering of the civilian population and in particular of the refugees in southern Lebanon.

In this context the European Union launches an appeal for free and secure circulation on the coastal road south of Beirut with the sole purpose of guaranteeing access for humanitarian assistance to the populations of Sidon, Tyre and Nabatiyet.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to pursue diplomatic efforts in the region and expresses its willingness to participate in proposals aimed at promoting a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): We listened with great attention to the address of His Excellency President Elias Hraoui — all the more so as Brazil has millions of people of Lebanese descent, as indeed we have a great number of people from all countries in the region.

Brazil has been following with grave concern the resurgence of hostilities in the Middle East, and deplores the unjustifiable suffering inflicted on innocent civilian populations and the heavy material loss incurred. My Government reiterates its support for the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians during armed conflicts and profoundly regrets that efforts towards the construction of definitive peace are being thwarted by acts of violence. Brazil calls on all parties involved to renounce the use of force and to solve their differences through peaceful means.

Brazil has consistently condemned all forms of terrorism in the strongest terms. We are fully aware of the grief imposed by such acts on the Israeli population. While recognizing the right of Israel to self-defence, we believe that the legitimate exercise of this right must not degenerate into massive and indiscriminate attacks against civilian centres.

In particular, it was with deep consternation that we learned of the attack against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) site in the Lebanese location of Qana, which resulted in a great number of casualties among the Lebanese civilian population and a number of United Nations peace-keepers from Fiji. This new outburst of violence does not correspond to the deepest feelings of the populations of the region. We are convinced that, at present, even among the mourners, there is a majority that decidedly shares the desire for peace.

We are hopeful that diplomatic efforts currently being made will restore momentum to the peace process so that a comprehensive and long-lasting solution acceptable to all parties may be reached. The establishment of peace is indispensable for the resumption of social and economic development and the well-being of all the peoples in the Middle East. Brazil adds its voice to the international call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and is prepared to contribute its efforts to the steps leading to reconciliation.

Brazil expects, moreover, that in every effort deployed towards the consolidation of peace, the right of the Lebanese people to territorial integrity and sovereignty shall be observed. We reaffirm our commitment to all relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and reaffirm that the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries must be fully respected.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to offer the President our utmost thanks for his immediate convening of this resumed session under agenda item 44 on the situation in the Middle East, at the request of Lebanon and other Arab countries.

This is the thirteenth consecutive day on which Lebanon has been subjected to Israeli aggression over almost its entire territory, involving bombs and shells from air, land and sea, and a blockade imposed by Israel against Lebanon at whim. It is well known that this is not the first time Lebanon has been subjected to an Israeli attack that far exceeds in scope and negative effects any pretext given for it. These negative effects include the collective evacuation of the population from the south to the north and the destruction of the infrastructure of the Lebanese economy supporting its people. The evacuees, expelled in waves, cowered in fear under a sky full of Israeli fighter jets swooping down upon fields and roads, meting out bombs and death. Where will these people live? Who will feed them? Whenever tranquillity is restored and they return to their homes and fields, another Israeli attack takes place, forcing them to flee to the north yet again.

One may accept the phenomenon of foreign refugees in another country, but to be a refugee in one's own country is inconceivable. That is none the less the situation of the people of southern Lebanon. No one knows how long they must remain the guests of those in the north, in the light of repeated Israeli aggressions.

And what about the Israeli maritime blockade of seaports, which prevent even the fishermen from making their living, a gift from God? How can Lebanon, the cradle of civilizations and a country of miracles, be fated to destruction and devastation? How can Israel call for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East while it bombs and shells Lebanon, violates its sovereignty and territorial integrity and threatens its stability?

Even a camp of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was not safe from Israel's bombs. That attack was a violation of all international laws and norms and a flouting of the international community and United Nations resolutions. How can there be a comprehensive peace when one of its tracks is not only blocked but diverted to the wrong direction?

My country has supported the peace process in the Middle East since it began in Madrid. We have lent all our support to the establishment of a lasting, fair and comprehensive peace and the building of mutual trust between Arab countries and Israel. The Arab world and the international community, however, are surprised by the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, which continues despite the Security Council's appeal in its resolution 1052 (1996) that all hostilities cease forthwith. In addition to its destructive effects in Lebanon and on its population, this aggression undoubtedly hinders and even stops the peace process on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks.

My delegation calls on the United Nations to stand against this aggression against Lebanon, a United Nations Member State, through the implementation of Security Council resolution 1052 (1996) and of all relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly 425 (1978), which calls for Israel's unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories. My delegation also calls upon all members of the General Assembly to adopt at this resumed session a resolution condemning Israel's aggression; calling for an immediate halt to its military operations; reaffirming the rights of Lebanon, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated; and calling for compensation so that it can rebuild its infrastructure if it is not to face a severe economic crisis.

The State of Bahrain reaffirms its condemnation of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, as expressed by its Council of Ministers in a meeting this week. This aggression is a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and of all international norms and laws, and it obstructs the peace process in the Middle East. The Council of Ministers also called for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.114

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Fiftieth Session Official Records

114th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 24 April 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Mr. Poernomo (Indonesia): For nearly two weeks the international community has witnessed the combined land, sea and air attacks by the armed forces of Israel against Lebanon, a founding Member of the United Nations. We have seen loss of life and serious injuries sustained by innocent men, women and children. Fijian officers serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) have suffered serious injuries as a result of Israeli shelling. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced. Lebanon's infrastructure has been destroyed.

For nearly two weeks we have also witnessed Lebanon's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty violated and Security Council resolutions flouted with impunity by Israel. With these latest military actions, the hopes engendered by the recent progress of the Madrid peace process risk being extinguished.

This situation must not be allowed to continue.

The Security Council has taken an important step in the right direction. As a member of the Council, Indonesia has been consistent in calling for a halt to hostilities in Lebanon and for full respect for the Council's resolution 425 (1978). Indonesia thus joined the consensus within the Council in adopting resolution 1052 (1996) on 18 April 1996. We should like to take this occasion to reaffirm our full support for the provisions contained therein, including the call for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties and the unequivocal reaffirmation of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries.

At the same time, we are all reminded of Israel's wilful failure to comply with the resolutions of the Security Council. Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) remain unimplemented, despite repeated appeals by the international community. In Lebanon today we are again witnessing Israel's defiance of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1052 (1996).

It is against such a backdrop that the Indonesian delegation fully supports convening this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly to consider the grave situation in Lebanon.

We listened attentively to the address by His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, who gave a poignant account of the terrible suffering of his people. In this context, the Assembly's consideration of the situation in Lebanon is indeed fully consistent with its broader responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is also reflective of the recognition of the need for enhanced cooperation and interaction between

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the Assembly and the Security Council, as the two preeminent political organs of the United Nations in dealing with issues that impinge upon the interests of all Member States.

Through its current operation Israel has demonstrated once again its utter contempt for Security Council resolution 425 (1978), as well the Charter provisions and principles of international law governing relations between States.

My delegation regards this military action, which has brought about scores of casualties among the civilian population, particularly among women and children, as unconscionable. Moreover, the massive exodus of people which has taken place threatens not only the stability of Lebanon, but also peace and security in the region.

It is quite clear to my delegation where the responsibility rests for an immediate end to the hostilities. We therefore call upon Israel to cease forthwith its military action against Lebanon and to withdraw its forces. It is my delegation's hope that our deliberations today, as well as the current intensive rounds of diplomatic efforts, will help bring about such an outcome, for the vicious cycle of violence and bloodshed which has bedeviled the Middle East must be broken and a comprehensive and just peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) must be realized.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The convening of this emergency session of the General Assembly to consider the grave developments in Lebanon is in itself an expression of the grave concern of the whole world over the war which has been raging for almost two weeks.

The Lebanese people, represented by His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of Lebanon, have come to us, beseeching the world's conscience for redress and for a cessation of the aggression that has been inflicted upon them.

The Israeli military operations — by land, sea and air — have continued unabated against most of Lebanon's territory, leaving behind hundreds of dead and wounded, mostly unarmed, innocent civilians, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of those who have been displaced from their villages and towns.

The whole world has witnessed this horror being inflicted upon the women, children and elderly in their shelters. We have witnessed death chasing them even in the safe haven of the United Nations.

The tragedy at the village of Qana last Thursday stands out: the blood of the Lebanese people and of the international peacekeepers has been mixed. This tragedy is evidence of the savagery of these attacks, which have aroused deep indignation in world opinion.

Among the objectives of these operations was the destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure, the foundation of its economic life, and the basis of the strenuous reconstruction efforts made by Lebanon after years of a destructive civil war. In this task, Lebanon counted on the sweat and sacrifices of its children in order to regain its previous prosperity, a prosperity achieved through the spirit of initiative inherent in the Lebanese people. Lebanon also embarked on this reconstruction in order to regain its position as a centre of banking and economic activity, as an arena for exchanges between the States of the region and as a beacon of science and knowledge.

The Security Council adopted resolution 1052 (1996) calling for a cessation of hostility. Yet every day continues to bring painful humanitarian tragedies to the Lebanese people without Israel responding to the call for a cease-fire and agreement on the implementation of resolution 425 (1978), which would ensure its withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

We denounce the Israeli aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We denounce the collective punishment represented by the comprehensive blockade of the greater part of Lebanon, as is the case with the occupied Palestinian territories. This collective punishment also takes the form of the demolition of houses, public facilities, ports and power stations. We had thought that all these practices had ended now that the region has entered a new era following the Madrid conference, an era which was supposed to represent the dividing line between the logic of war and that of peace.

Experience has shown the inability of force to impose solutions. It has shown the danger of collective punishments, which feed the spiral of violence and terrorism in all its manifestations. A return to these erroneous policies, whatever its justification, would take us back to that vicious cycle that results only in sowing the seeds of hatred, bitterness and the desire for vengeance.

Tunisia and its President have repeatedly reaffirmed the urgent need for the peace process to succeed, as the only way to stop the bloodshed and the cycle of violence. This success would ensure the safety and security of each and every State within its borders. It would enable all the States of the region to concentrate on the development and construction struggle.

With these goals in mind, and being attached to the principles of peace, justice and international law, Tunisia has supported the peace process since its beginning at Madrid, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace.

From the same perspective, Tunisia has continued to draw attention to the need to protect the peace process and to safeguard it against any setbacks. Tunisia has also pointed out the need for cooperation between all those of goodwill within and outside the region in order to advance the peace process to its desired objectives on all its different tracks: the Palestinian, the Syrian and the Lebanese alike. This would ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds, southern Lebanon and the Syrian Golan, thus achieving just and comprehensive peace.

In the tragic circumstances in which sisterly Lebanon lives, we express our full solidarity to its President, its Government and its people. We call upon all those involved in international affairs to use their influence to put an end to the Israeli military actions forthwith and to pursue the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), thus putting an end to the occupation of southern Lebanon and ending all the causes of the violence.

The General Assembly has followed the question of the Middle East in all its aspects since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has contributed effectively to the expression of the legal and political basis of the peace process in the Middle East. Today it is called upon to support Lebanon and its people; to stand by its side in order to end the injustice inflicted upon it; to put an end to its tragedy; to stop the aggression against it; and to compensate it for its massive losses.

The international community must reaffirm strongly the need for respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon. It is called upon to provide economic, financial and humanitarian assistance in order to enable Lebanon to reconstruct what was destroyed by the war and to face the tragic situation in which its people currently live.

Lebanon gave humanity the alphabet; it has contributed to the development of human civilization throughout all the stages of its history. Until the recent past it was an oasis of peace, coexistence and creative thought. We are all indebted to Lebanon; we must repay our debt, recognizing its great contributions.

Tunisia, which has brotherly ties to Lebanon dating from the dawn of history, ties which strengthen daily, hopes that the appeal of Tyre and the surrounding areas, which contributed to the establishment of Carthage and the propagation of the principle of freedom and honest, peaceful competition in the Mediterranean, will reverberate in the Assembly; we hope that the Assembly will support Tyre and end the aggression against it, enabling it once again to assume its historical role.

In this regard, we renounce the indiscriminate bombardment of the historical monuments in Tyre, which are considered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to be part of the heritage of mankind. This aggression is a breech of international law and of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The salvation of the Middle East and the end of its tragedies depend upon the renunciation of the logic of war and on the continuation of the peace process, on the basis of mutual trust, goodwill and compliance with commitments. This would achieve a just, lasting and durable peace ensuring security and stability for all.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We are here in this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly in order to combat the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. This is appropriate, given the grave threat this presents to the peace and security of the Middle East.

An address was given to the General Assembly yesterday afternoon by the President of Lebanon, who gave an exhaustive, objective statement on the consequences to Lebanon's people, its economy, its security and its stability. This is evidence of the seriousness of this aggression and of the scope of its consequences. It is therefore crucially important that the aggression be ended immediately and that the necessary legal and political arrangements be adopted in order to eliminate its causes and, primarily, end Israel's persistent occupation of southern Lebanon and its interference in its internal affairs.

This aggression, which has been going of for two weeks, has caused hundreds of deaths and injured and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The Lebanese people emerged from a deadly civil war with the wisdom of its strength and its youth to use its energy for the development and reconstruction of the nation. It is our hope that prosperity will come to Lebanon.

The Government of Lebanon has joined in this effort, convinced of the value of the peace process, in order to bring about stability and security in its bloodied homeland. However, Israel has continued its methods, which have shown themselves to be a failure and to have disastrous consequences. These methods know only the logic of brute force, repression and massive reprisals as a means of imposing security in part of its land, while ignoring the rights and security of others in their own territory.

For almost 14 days Israel has continued to bombard civilian installations in Lebanon, causing the death of more than 200 people and the displacement of over 300,000 others. The Israeli army has been brutally bombarding Lebanese installations and has trampled upon all the rules and principles of the international community. International practice demands that it spare civilian installations from deadly attacks.

Israel has launched attacks from the air, land and sea against Lebanon. The brutality of these bombardments reached their height when Israel imposed a sea blockade against Lebanon. The Israeli navy is bombarding coastal villages in Lebanon, causing the complete destruction of civilian installations and, in particular, of historic sites on the southern Lebanese coast. Furthermore, the Israeli navy has been attacking ships bringing foodstuffs, commodities and other basic needs for the people of southern Lebanon and has cut off and isolated the coastal road between the south and the rest of the country.

We must now ask the following questions. What is the relationship between Israeli security and Lebanese power plants, which were destroyed by the Israeli army during its military operations? What is the value in terms of security of having the Israeli army demolish the homes of civilians in the south? What is the value in terms of security of Israel's attacking archaeological and historical sites on the Lebanese coast? The answer to all these questions confirms that Israel hates that people and wants to take vengeance for what the country has done during a limited period in its history. It also confirms that Israel defies the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council and of international public opinion.

Kuwait feels that the massacre at the United Nations forces' base on Thursday, 18 April, which caused the death of more than a hundred Lebanese citizens, including children, old people and women who had taken refuge in a building bombarded by Israel, testifies to the fact that Israel does not respect the simplest rules of morality, which others recognize, regarding the protection of unarmed, innocent civilians.

Last week, during the Security Council meeting held to consider the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, my delegation clearly condemned that aggression. The Council of Ministers of Kuwait has expressly condemned it and expressed its support for the people and Government of Lebanon. My delegation would like to reaffirm that these Israeli military operations, carried out against civilian targets in Lebanon, are contrary to all humanitarian principles and values, and are a flagrant violation of the rules of international law, the principles of the Charter, and the armistice agreement concluded between Israel and Lebanon in 1949. Kuwait asks Israel to apply the relevant resolutions of the Security Council — in particular, resolution 425 (1978), which calls upon Israel to immediately cease all military operations against Lebanese territory and to withdraw all its military forces from the occupied territories in Lebanon. It also demands that the international community continue to put pressure on Israel to prompt it to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon.

Alas, the clear condemnation by the international community of Israel's military operations against Lebanon, condemnation expressed in the Security Council on behalf of various regional groups, has had no effect on Israeli behaviour. The same is true of Security Council resolution 1052 (1996), adopted unanimously by the Council last week, which calls for the cessation of military operations, given the loss of human lives and property. The international community has witnessed a series of aggressive acts against Lebanese sovereignty, in spite of the adoption of that resolution and in spite of the repeated appeals by the international community that military operations cease as quickly as possible. All the victims, all the deaths, all the displaced among the Lebanese people, over and above the destruction of the country's infrastructure, result from a kind of State terrorism, the most serious form of terrorism.

Indeed, my delegation feels that there are several forms of terrorism; the recent Israeli aggression against Lebanon is a form of terrorism suffered by small, peaceful States. Kuwait vigorously condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It condemns and rejects Israeli practices and the unreasonable reaction of the Israelis, which included the excessive use of military force. Such practices strengthen feelings of hatred and vengeance among many people in the region.

Kuwait therefore feels that peace cannot be achieved in Lebanon and the region unless Israel takes the following measures.

First, Israel should immediately cease its military operations against Lebanon and should commit itself not to carry out any further aggression against Lebanese territory.

Secondly, Israel should immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Lebanese territory, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Thirdly, Israel should support and pursue the peace process in the Middle East in order to reach a global, just and lasting peace in all areas, and in particular in Syria and in Lebanon. It should implement the relevant international resolutions adopted at the Madrid peace conference and totally withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, including the Arab Syrian Golan, and should respect the principle of land for peace. Kuwait feels that no lasting peace can be achieved without agreement on the Syrian and Lebanese problems.

Fourthly, Israel must commit itself to compensating Lebanon for the material and human losses Lebanon has suffered as a result of the aggression. This should be done within the framework of international arrangements to be adopted in this respect.

Kuwait, which remembers the courageous and honourable positions and attitudes adopted by Lebanon during our ordeal when Iraq occupied Kuwait, reaffirms that it stands alongside Lebanon during its ordeal. Kuwait is proud of the resistance of the Lebanese people and their sacrifices to defend their sovereignty and independence.

His Highness the Emir of Kuwait, because of Kuwait's faith in the Lebanese people and its sympathy with the suffering of the Lebanese people, has given instructions for the sending of emergency humanitarian assistance to Lebanon to enable the Lebanese to overcome the consequences of the Israeli aggression against their territory. An air bridge has been established to deliver this assistance, which includes foodstuffs as well as a medical team and fully equipped ambulances. We appeal to the international community to participate immediately in saving the Lebanese people in their time of hardship so that they can overcome the consequences and devote their efforts to developing their homeland in security and stability.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that we are meeting today within the framework of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly during which the members of the United Nations have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of an Organization set up to preserve peace and stability for all the peoples of the world. Alas, in meeting today to consider the question of a people's sovereignty and security, we are dealing with security that has been violated and a people that have been deprived of their dreams for the future.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): The President of the Lebanese Republic came here to present from this rostrum the message of his people to the international community. He did so by highlighting all of the acts of Israeli aggression against the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, as well as the human losses and material destruction which this two-week-long aggression has caused.

Algeria deeply sympathizes with the Lebanese people and its leaders during this terrible trial. The date 22 April, which the Lebanese Government designated an official day of mourning, was one of intense feeling for the Algerian people, who observed it with reverence for the memory of the victims and with other forms of fraternal solidarity.

In its intervention in the Security Council on 15 April, the Algerian delegation deplored the fact that since the adoption of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which remains unimplemented, an unfortunate phenomenon has arisen — that of becoming inured to recurrent outbreaks of violence and the accompanying upheavals for the civilian population, before warning:

> "recent events in Lebanon are of such magnitude and scope that a reaction by the international community is urgently needed to avoid a double

> catastrophe — humanitarian and political." *(S/PV.3653, p. 22)*

Such a response, unfortunately, did not come from the Security Council, and a catastrophe occurred when several dozen civilians, who had sought refuge under the United Nations flag, were massacred. This unspeakable act, which stunned the world's conscience, had the disturbing characteristics of a reckless gamble, a headlong rush, and appeals for restraint and appeals to reason can have no effect on those concerned.

Furthermore, even after the Security Council, after laborious negotiations, had called for an immediate end to hostilities, the bombardments continued, and even intensified, adding to the human cost of raids which only undermine the prospects for a just and lasting peace in the region.

Leaving international problems unresolved for too long produces effects which add to the inherent seriousness of the problems and set back the prospects of peace. In this case, we see a full return to the illegal occupation by Israel of Lebanese territory from which the Council, in its resolution 425 (1978), had called upon it to withdraw unconditionally. This continued occupation creates instability and prevents Lebanon from extending its sovereign authority to all the country's territory. Therefore, it is high time for the solution contained in Security Council resolution 425 (1978) be implemented, binding everyone to make sincere efforts to promote undiminished regional security based on legality.

The United Nations Charter is a code of conduct which all Member States of the Organization are committed to respect. The cardinal principles of refraining from the threat or use of force and the pacific settlement of international disputes are binding on all, everywhere and under all circumstances. Mishandling situations in such a way as to imperil the institutions of the system of collective security could lead to a dangerous drift. Against this background, the Israeli aggression against Lebanon calls for vigorous condemnation by our Assembly, as well as for the adoption of the measures indicated by the President of the Lebanese Republic to eliminate the consequences of the outbreak of violence for which Israel is responsible.

By demanding renewed respect for the United Nations Charter and for international law, the General Assembly will increase the credibility of our Organization and promote the peace process in the Middle East by protecting it from the use of force and *faits accomplis*.

The President: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 1 p.m. today.

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate that have not yet inscribed their names on the list to do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Rodrígues Parrilla (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Today Lebanon is united, united in the mourning of its people and in the questions asked by its children, as to why they are being so cruelly punished, which go unanswered.

The international community witnesses with sorrow this new aggression by Israel against the Lebanese people and is rightly gravely concerned over this threat, with unpredictable consequences, to the Middle East peace process.

It is because of all this that our General Assembly is meeting here today, following the loss of hundreds of civilian lives, the creation of hundreds of thousands of refugees, huge material losses and irreparable damage to archaeological and cultural sites, the common heritage of humanity.

The President of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, by his presence here and his address, has made a decisive contribution to our Assembly's work.

We are meeting today following 12 days of fierce military attacks by Israel, violation of the principles of international law, non-compliance with conventions on international humanitarian law and the disproportionate, unpunished, and unjustifiable use of military force. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its internationally recognized borders have been gravely violated, and serious damage has been done to the efforts of the Lebanese people to rebuild their country. These tragic events, which have continued even since the silence that brought Beirut to a standstill in tribute to the dead, show the need to take effective international measures to stop this crime.

The General Assembly has met to make its decisive contribution, since the Security Council failed to do so, with a deplorable neglect of its duties. There is no time for procedural complications or long debates. Minute by minute innocent people die, so every minute of inaction entails an enormous responsibility. Cuba hopes that the General Assembly will do justice to the Lebanese people; that it will strongly condemn the aggression by the Government of Israel and demand that it be ended. Cuba hopes that the General Assembly will be consistent with its own decisions and resolutions — in particular, those adopted on the situation in the Middle East and the peace process there, and with other relevant resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 425 (1978) — and demands their full implementation. Cuba also calls for respect for Lebanon's territorial integrity, sovereignty and internationally recognized borders. We call for compensation for all material losses and join the appeal to the United Nations and the international community to assist Lebanon in its national reconstruction efforts.

Cuba demands the return of all occupied Arab territories and supports the right of the Palestinian people to have a State of its own, with Jerusalem as its capital. Cuba calls for respect for the peace agreements, which the international community welcomed and which aroused great hopes. It calls for compliance with the Declaration of Principles and the continuation of negotiations on outstanding matters, including the question of Jerusalem. The peace process as a whole is jeopardized by these actions, which distance us from a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for all in the region.

Cuba, which for over 35 years has been and continues to be a victim of terrorist acts and aggression that have taken the lives of many of our people, condemns all acts of terrorism. But no national security reason, no reason of State, no pretext associated with international or regional peace and security, no terrorist act, can justify aggression, terrorism, the occupation of territories, the massacre of civilians and violations of the norms of international humanitarian law, or any unilateral measures such as the closure of borders, which silently kill children, women and the elderly.

The General Assembly is meeting in the natural exercise of the authority conferred upon it by the United Nations Charter, whose validity and usefulness are reaffirmed by the dramatic events that occur every day. We live in a world in which every year more human beings die because they lack any rights than died during the worst year of the Second World War, yet the United Nations has been able to do very little to guarantee millions of hungry, sick and illiterate people the right to life, health and education, and to ensure that the great majority of our nations have the right to development. No political manipulation of human rights can conceal these realities.

But if this argument is not considered sufficient to prove that the world remains as unjust, unequal and dangerous as it was some years ago, it suffices to look at the conflicts which, with their profound causes that no one can resolve and their tragic consequences that cannot be prevented or avoided, fill the newspapers every day. In essence, every day there is evidence of the inability of the United Nations to remove the causes of those conflicts and the inability of international mechanisms to build peace. Where is the new philosophy of this era? What actions have accompanied the rhetoric of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations? What is the final destination of the tons of documents that become confused with the *raison d'être* of the United Nations?

If anyone could have legitimate doubts as to the effectiveness of the Security Council in this most recent case and on the practical effects of the ambiguous, inadequate and weak language of the resolution adopted by the Council, as it was described by even some of the Council members in their explanations of vote, subsequent events have tragically removed all those doubts.

Today it can be said that the language of that resolution, far from being a deterrent, accentuated the climate of impunity; far from bringing us closer to peace, contributed to intensifying tension; far from bringing us closer to stated objectives, showed the United Nations as inactive and ineffective. It is regrettable that, as pointed out by many speakers in this debate, the predictable becomes obvious while the international community remains passive.

The causes are as well-known as they are difficult to resolve: double standards; lack of democracy, of public information and transparency; informal consultations and secret lobbying; the obsolete veto power; and the threat of the veto, which has become an even more dangerous and unacceptable instrument because the consequences of using it are not publicly assumed.

That is why this session of the General Assembly is so important. We attend knowing that it concerns a regular procedure and the use of powers that should be part of our daily lives. But it is important mainly for showing the resolve of the overwhelming majority of Member States to revitalize the General Assembly, enhance its effectiveness and give its powers the prominence they deserve. This is the way to true strengthening of the United Nations, to making it serve the international community efficiently. This is the way of reform, which means developing the universal character of the United Nations and providing for the sovereign and equal participation of all States, large and small, rich and poor. This is the way towards being effective, which means finding practical, concrete solutions to the pressing problems of humankind. This is the way of modernity, which means finding new solutions to old and new problems.

We are pleased to see that a clear course of action is being established by the General Assembly in order to support the sovereign right of States, to ensure that the principles of the Charter are followed, to defend international peace and security, and to make the United Nations effective, even in spite of the failure of some of its organs. It is most important that, faced with events such as those that have occurred recently, the General Assembly should fully exercise its powers, using expeditious and simple procedures. This makes us hopeful that the Assembly will be able to do so as a permanent part of its daily work, not having to deal with tragic events such as these, but in a healthy and natural way playing its role as the universal, supreme and sovereign organ of the United Nations.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to welcome, on behalf of the delegation of Egypt, His Excellency President Elias Hraoui of Lebanon. Allow me also to reaffirm the solidarity of the Government and people of Egypt with Lebanon and our support for the strong and comprehensive statement made by the President at yesterday's meeting.

The delegation of Egypt expresses its solidarity with the statement made by the Chairman of the Arab Group. We subscribe to its support for, and solidarity with, sisterly Lebanon and its patient people, who have been subjected to vicious Israeli aggression since 10 April.

The international community, as represented by the United Nations, has long delayed, in an unjustified and unacceptable manner, dealing with the dangerous developments following Israel's attack by air, sea and land on Lebanon. In the same unjustified and unacceptable manner, the Security Council dragged its feet for too long before it convened last Thursday to adopt, after eight long days of Israeli aggression, a resolution that does not rise to the level of the explosive situation in Lebanon. The resolution does not reflect the grave threat to international and regional peace and security represented by that situation. Neither its drafting nor its content is commensurate with the gravity of the Israeli aggression and its serious consequences for the people of Lebanon, who have been subjected to killing and displacement, let alone with the destructive negative implications for Lebanon's infrastructure and for its Government's tenacious reconstruction efforts and ambitious reconstruction plans after long years of a destructive civil war.

In view of the situation, it is small wonder that the Israeli aggression should continue against Lebanon, so far without any regard to the resolutions of the Council, the established legal norms of international relations, the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, or the destructive implications of this savage attack on the present and the future of peace in the Middle East.

Egypt, which initiated the peace process in the Middle East and which has led the call to turn over a new leaf in the region, to put an end to wars and fighting and to settle international disputes by peaceful means, cannot under any circumstances accept the use of force by Israel and its continued aggression against the people of Lebanon. The Charter of the United Nations has proscribed clearly and unambiguously the use of force in international relations. The Charter has determined the criteria under which States can resort to the legitimate right of self-defence. However much some might try to justify the Israeli military actions, these international criteria are not applicable to the repeated, massive attacks against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, nor against innocent unarmed civilians in Lebanon.

Suffice it to refer to what was said by His Excellency the President of Lebanon yesterday to refute any flimsy excuses that might be given to justify the Israeli aggression. He said:

> "as soon as Israel withdraws, the Lebanese State will guarantee security in this region". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 113th meeting, p. 4*)

Lebanon resorted to the General Assembly, with the support of the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, after the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, chose not to discharge its responsibility in the required manner. The resolution adopted by the Council did not condemn Israel or its savage aggressions; it did not impose a forceful cease-fire; it did not call unambiguously and irrevocably for the full, unconditional implementation of resolution 425 (1978); nor did it deal in any way with the responsibility of the aggressor to compensate the victim of its aggression.

The Israeli aggression against Lebanon is a dangerous precedent that reminds us all of an era that we thought was over for ever. This dangerous precedent could pave the way for similar acts of aggression under one pretext or the other in any part of the world, so who will be the next victim?

The Council has let Lebanon down. Will the General Assembly now give it redress? Shall we all here face our responsibilities courageously, as Members of the United Nations? Shall we decide here with one voice, loudly and clearly, that the logic of the use of force in relations between States must be rejected, regardless of who the aggressor or the victim may be? Shall we do so without double standards, without bias, without discrimination and without favouritism?

Egypt supports all the bilateral and regional efforts made to stop the bloodshed in Lebanon. We support and participate in all these endeavours, yet at the same time we believe in the imperative need for the United Nations to discharge its basic responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is high time for the hellish, vicious circle of violence in the Middle East to be broken. It is time for all the parties concerned and for all those who take an interest in the peace process to make an additional and redoubled effort in that direction, an effort that should be guided by clear vision and a far-sighted strategic view that does not sacrifice peace for short-term interests motivated by electoral considerations here or there.

Silence in the face of the Israeli aggression, condoning it or collusion in it does not serve the cause of peace in the Middle East. Peace is not served by turning a blind eye to the humanitarian tragedy that the people of Lebanon, under fire by the Israeli war machine, have been experiencing. Peace is not served by looking the other way after the bombing of the historical sites in the city of Tyre, which are a common heritage of humankind. Peace is not served by looking the other way after the bombing last Thursday of a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) refugee camp. The Israeli forces shelled that area despite the fact that the Force had informed Israel that scores of civilians had taken refuge in the camp, which led to the killing of more than a hundred persons, including men, women and children.

The advocates of silence, condoning, collusion, turning a blind eye or looking the other way do not serve the cause of peace. They ignore the fact that peace is an indivisible whole; that not only is State terrorism no different from the terrorism of individuals, it is even more dangerous; and that oppression and humiliation beget extremism, that violence begets violence and that those who sow the seeds of violence reap only bitterness.

The General Assembly is called upon today to reaffirm Israel's responsibility for compensating Lebanon for the massive damage resulting from the Israeli aggression against Lebanese economic facilities. This aggression has set the reconstruction of Lebanon back many steps. The burden and responsibility for facing this setback must be shouldered by the international community and the United Nations system, and by all us as Members of the United Nations.

Donor countries and international financial institutions face a large, double responsibility *vis-à-vis* Lebanon. It is our hope that a clear message will be conveyed from this rostrum during this resumed session of the General Assembly — a message that reflects a high level of political commitment to supporting the efforts of sisterly Lebanon on the road to reconstruction.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm that an immediate cease-fire and an end to the bloodletting in Lebanon is our urgent demand. All peace-loving forces must strive to achieve this immediate objective, because peace in the Middle East is the ultimate goal and must never be lost in the din of military adventures.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Bangladesh was party to, and strongly supported, the request for the reopening of agenda item 44, with its focus on the Israeli attacks against Lebanon and their consequences.

The rationale for our support has sound justification. We have all heard the intensely moving statement of the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui. We cannot but join him in his sense of shock, horror, anguish and revulsion over the continuing destruction of his country; the mounting toll of dead and wounded; and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. Israeli warships, artillery, mortar and aerial attacks continue to decimate Lebanon's newly rebuilt infrastructure. Eighty per cent of the electrical supply has been destroyed by premeditated attacks on power stations. Residential areas and archaeological sites have been targeted, with callous disregard of consequences. The sea blockade compounds the hardships. Over a hundred Lebanese civilians were killed by the aerial bombardment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) compound at Qana. At the core of this situation of calculated reprisal and use of excessive force are complex political and electoral equations that touch on duplicity and double standards.

Everyone knows that the right of self-defence is not an unlimited right; the response is to be commensurate, even against a clear aggressor. Israel cannot vent its frustration on blameless Lebanon under such an elastic and all-encompassing umbrella. It creates an untenable precedent.

Eight days elapsed before the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 1052 (1996). In essence, this called for a cease-fire; stressed the need for diplomatic negotiations to continue; reaffirmed commitment to the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon; called for respect for the safety and security of civilians; appealed for humanitarian assistance; and called for freedom of movement for UNIFIL and the fulfilment of its mandate.

Yet this much-needed Council action was too little, too late. The Council's credibility has been compromised. This was not only because of the omission of key elements, such as those highlighted in the draft resolution submitted by the 19 Arab States, but also because, after 12 days, the attacks continue, and violence has not ended. The Israeli operation "Grapes of Wrath", in the words of the Israeli Prime Minister, has no time-limit. Its objectives far exceed those mentioned in the debate preceding the Security Council's resolution and directly retards the progress of the peace process. In the eyes of the world, this brutal campaign, this gunboat diplomacy is indefensible. It has already backfired politically and militarily. It certainly deserves condemnation.

The urgent consideration of this item by the General Assembly is necessary. It reflects the conscience of the majority of the world's nations. It also calls for a more determined push to end hostilities; to redress the situation and compensate Lebanon for the destruction it has suffered; to push for massive humanitarian relief and longer-term reconstruction; and above all, to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. This entails the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory.

Perhaps the most important element of this Assembly debate is to highlight the serious concern over the impact of Israeli aggression on the Middle East peace process, a process that all countries support. Israeli actions have certainly impeded progress. Bangladesh joins the Non-Aligned Movement and the OIC countries in emphasizing that peace cannot be imposed; it must evolve. Only a negotiated settlement for a comprehensive, just and durable solution of the Middle East problem can bring an end to violence and tension in the region.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Lebanese crisis is now in its second week, and there are no signs of a diminishing intensity in the military operations. Israeli officials state that the military actions will continue as long as necessary. However, while Israel's massive bombing has resulted in the loss of a few Hezbollah fighters, all the other victims have been peaceful citizens of Lebanon.

The shelling of Israel from Lebanese territory continues. Unfortunately, resolution 1052 (1996), which was adopted unanimously last week, has not yet been implemented. That resolution calls for an immediate end to hostilities and for respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.

The crisis is very serious. It is impeding further steps to bring about a political settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Under these conditions, Russia, as a co-sponsor of the peace process in the Middle East, considers that consideration of the Lebanese question at this session of the General Assembly is justified and timely.

Massive military operations have led to numerous losses among the civilian population, destruction and the mass exodus of refugees. The tragedy reached its peak with the shelling of a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) battalion headquarters, which led to the death of more than a hundred peaceful citizens who had sought refuge there. The United Nations peace-keepers also suffered.

This incident needs careful further study. The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Yeltsin, in his statement on 19 April on the events in Lebanon, said:

> "What took place in Lebanon was absolutely unacceptable. The Israeli military operation on Lebanese territory should be stopped immediately. We must put an end to the massive violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon, which has led to a total humanitarian disaster in that country. It goes without saying that it is necessary to ensure as well the end of the shelling of the northern regions of Israel."

In principle, this question has to be solved within the overall framework of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the so-called "security zone" and by ending the occupation of Lebanon. Only then will it be possible to shift full responsibility onto the Lebanese or the Syrian Government.

Striving to make a maximum attempt to help achieve a peaceful settlement, mainly through a rapid cease-fire, on the instruction of the President of Russia, the Foreign Minister of our country, Mr. Primakov, travelled to the countries in the region, visiting Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Negotiations took place with the leadership of those countries. Meetings were held with the Foreign Ministers of France and Italy, and contact was maintained with United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher. This confirms Russia's intention to do all it can to help find a way out of this crisis by relying on our many years of experience, our extensive ties in the region and on our capabilities.

The Russian Federation assumes that in the present situation, the main goal is to put an end to military actions, and it calls upon all he parties involved to show restraint. We are convinced that the vicious circle of confrontation can be broken only through political means. As a co-sponsor of the peace process, Russia is most insistent that Israel and Lebanon immediately reach a peace settlement on the basis of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and for ensuring the security of both countries. That is the main condition for stabilizing the situation. We understand that implementing resolution 425 (1978) will involve a specific process, and it should be fully balanced.

One cannot create for one of the parties advantages intended, *inter alia*, to help that party solve some of its own political problems. The history of the Middle East conflict has shown that attempts to achieve peace and stability exclusively through military means lead nowhere. A continued reliance on force will inevitably lead to escalated violence, which could undermine the results of the many years of efforts made to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Russia's objective is not to seek political dividends but to establish peace and stability in the region. Russia has been, is, and will remain in the Middle East, where it will act to achieve these goals.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): It is impossible for people of goodwill who are deeply committed to the cause of peace in this world, and particularly in the Middle East, to find any reasonable explanation for the nature and level of the outrage that has been unleashed in Lebanon against unarmed civilian populations. We are witnessing massive bombardments of Lebanon far beyond the occupied so-called "security zone", deliberately targeting civilian facilities in and around that country's capital. In view of Israel's claim to be able to "surgically strike" any target it chooses, we can only surmise that the destruction of ambulances carrying civilians, of homes containing families, and of the main road out of the occupied zone for the surviving and desperate refugees, or relief supplies coming in, is to all intents and purposes deliberate.

But the destruction of the United Nations compound in Qana, filled as it was with refugees, must go down as one of the most heinous acts of this long and bitter conflict. There is no justification for directing over a dozen artillery shells into a United Nations "protected area" for some 12 to 15 minutes, despite an acknowledged official United Nations request to desist after it had begun. A shaken woman survivor moaned: "We came to the United Nations camp to protect ourselves, not to die". The world is understandably appalled at this wanton slaughter of some hundred civilians. That some would even hesitate to condemn this atrocity is equally perplexing.

Reports from the area of Israel's blitz over the length and breadth of Lebanon indicate that the Israelis are satisfied that Hezbollah, or at least someone, is being punished — hence the resort to massive air strikes, coastal bombardments and the deadly targeting of non-Hezbollah villages and people. The ghost towns, the dying, the homeless, the "killing fields" of Lebanon are taken in Israel as a justifiable price for all Arabs —

wherever they might be — to pay for Hezbollah's provocations.

But what is unknown at this moment is where these shells have indeed landed. Was it on Lebanon, or was it on the peace efforts in the Middle East, for which so many have valiantly worked, or on the forthcoming elections in Israel? No one disputes the right of any Government to act in the defence of perceived threats to its people, and Israel has the right to protect its citizens. And there can be no denying the damage and loss of life Israel has endured during the history of this conflict. Nevertheless, it is difficult for reasonable people not to be appalled at the disproportionate action of Israel. The one shell on the United Nations compound killed more Lebanese than the number of casualties Israel has suffered since this conflict began in 1982. That, by any reasonable measure, is excessive, particularly as there have been no reported Israeli deaths in these latest Hezbollah provocations. One must also not forget that the Qana victims were not even those in conflict with Israel, but innocent civilians known to be under United Nations protection.

Israel's actions also contravene the tenets of the 1993 accord by which Israel and Hezbollah agreed not to target civilians in their respective areas. Too many creditable reports suggest that the first violations against non-combatants are to be attributed to a frustrated Israel, unable effectively to silence Hezbollah at a critical time.

That Israel has persisted in this outrage not against its immediate adversaries but against the civilians of Lebanon, despite universal condemnation, is instructive. While many have laboured long for genuine peace, trade and goodwill in the Middle East, often making difficult and substantial adjustments in historical policies, this latest round of events appears to indicate that Israel is still on the old world adversarial footing, unwilling to go as far as the Arabs in genuinely seeking peace. Each so-called concession is overloaded with conditions limiting its scope or with time constraints, delaying for years its effective implementation.

The time has come for Israel to recognize that it must withdraw from its occupation of nearly 10 per cent of the State of Lebanon. As we understand it, this is virtually the only substantial claim of Hezbollah, and it is justifiable. It is called for in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which Israel has ignored. Everywhere we come up against the same issue — Israel's occupation of Arab land and its reluctance, if not its refusal, to return it. The all too predictable outcome is that of a recurring pattern of hostilities, despite what has been a remarkable Arab effort from many quarters for peace and good relations. Everywhere the issue of land and peace confronts us, and shows few signs of going away. This is the core problem — the cause of the region's persistent insecurity — and it will have to be addressed, not only by Israel but by the Arabs as well. Lasting peace needs more than temporary and tentative deals.

The presence in the Middle East of the French Foreign Minister, the American Secretary of State and envoys of the European Union confirms the gravity of this latest upsurge in violence and the urgency of the need to address the underlying causes of insecurity in the region.

The draft resolution before the Assembly describes and reflects the real nature of events in Lebanon: the violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians, the refusal to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), the high number of civilian casualties, the relentless bombardments, and the need to recognize the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. It is a fair draft resolution, reflecting the world's indignation and the need for Israel to respect all of Lebanon if there is to be peace.

The tragedy is that Lebanon is not Israel's perceived enemy, and has done nothing to deserve the brutal force being used against it. This is totally unacceptable. This human tragedy cannot continue.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The General Assembly is meeting today to consider the comprehensive aggression launched by Israel against Lebanon, and its dire consequences. This meeting is taking place after the Security Council failed to put an end to aggression and punish the aggressor in accordance with its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. This has enabled Israel to continue its aggression. Lebanon's decision, supported by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to resort to this forum, which represents all the peoples of the world and the world's living conscience, is a further attempt to have the whole world face up to its responsibilities to defend international peace and security. It is an attempt to put an end to Israel's continued aggression and defiance of the norms of international law, international legitimacy, the United Nations Charter and the noble values agreed upon by all the peoples of the world represented in this international Organization.

The destruction, massacres and immeasurable suffering in Lebanon reported by the mass media, which show human bodies that have been cut up and mutilated, is unequivocal proof of the barbaric nature of the aggression taking place at the hands of the Israelis. Israel began the aggression against Lebanon by launching a heinous war, leaving behind terrible devastation in villages and towns, and transforming most parts of Lebanon into a hell. Israel has destroyed the economic and social infrastructure of more than one third of Lebanon. Its aeroplanes have attacked hundreds of thousands of civilians, who have had to leave their villages and towns. Israel has engaged in a campaign aimed at utter starvation, and has used its gunboats to shell relief and supply convoys carrying medical equipment to displaced persons. Its bombardment has even reached the coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme. Israel, through its shelling, its arms, its destruction and its collective punishment, has tried to undermine the sovereignty of a founding Member of the United Nations on the pretext of security — a security gained at the expense of Arab dignity, territorial integrity and security.

Security has been Israel's pretext for launching all of its aggressive wars. Israel well knows that real security cannot be achieved through occupation, displacement and bombardment by tanks, artillery, gunboats and aeroplanes. Israel must understand that its peace and security cannot be achieved by bombarding an ambulance carrying children burnt by its heinous shells.

No friend of a peace based on international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions could convince himself that this terrible aggression against Lebanon is for the sake of peace, security or stability. Israel is carrying out a misleading campaign in some areas of the international mass media. Those who want peace cannot kill innocent civilians; those who want peace cannot occupy land and displace its inhabitants; those who want peace cannot bombard the peace-keeping operations centre. Israel, which has displaced millions of Arabs and has been committing terrorist acts, is the last country to accuse others of being terrorists.

The Israeli occupation of Arab lands is the ultimate incarnation of terror and its main cause in our region. This fact cannot be changed by calling for conferences in an attempt to alter the facts, mislead world public opinion or try to justify Israel's current State terror against Lebanon.

Israel refers to its aggression against Arab countries as "fighting terrorism" and "self-defence". But at the same time it describes acts of self-defence by the Arabs as merely "terrorism". The Syrian Arab Republic condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and considers it a criminal act. But it believes that peoples under occupation have the right to resist. This is a right guaranteed by all international instruments and by the United Nations. It is a sacred part of our legal heritage. It imposes an obligation on all countries, and on the international family of the United Nations, to stand against those who try to sacrifice international security norms in order to achieve their own special peace and security. That is why killing civilians and destroying houses constitute the real terror.

Lebanon accepted the peace process, which was started at the Madrid conference, in an attempt to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 338 (1973) and 242 (1967) and on the principle of land for peace. Lebanon has cooperated with all the efforts of the two countries that are guardians of the peace process in this respect, but these efforts have met with Israel's intransigence and continued defiance of international legitimacy.

Peace is a great objective, and in the Middle East it is more than necessary. But, regrettably, Israel does not understand its comprehensive and just meaning. For Israel, peace means the achievement of strategic objectives based on the imposition of Israeli peace. Israeli peace is based on obfuscating the clear fact that it is still continuing to occupy other people's countries. Those who follow events in our region believe that Israel's objectives are unacceptable, and we cannot be silent about them. The international community must speak up. It is called upon to take a decisive and determined position, and to impose the relevant resolution to prevent any attempts to circumvent the legitimate international resolutions.

At their emergency meeting in Cairo, Ministers of the Arab countries adopted a resolution condemning Israeli aggression against Lebanon. It called for an end to the aggression, the process of destruction and the forced displacement of people. It called upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities for containing the aggression and forcing Israel to implement the Council's resolution 425 (1978).

Today we declare from this rostrum that we stand by the side of Lebanon in its crisis. I confirm our support for all the comments made here by His Excellency the President of Lebanon, and for his requests. Syria has been cooperating genuinely with all the efforts to end the suffering of the Lebanese people. We are hopeful that this international Organization will shoulder its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security by condemning this aggression against Lebanon and forcing Israel to withdraw immediately from all Lebanese territories, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Lebanon should also be compensated for the damage that it has suffered. In this way we can maintain the credibility of this Organization, which the peoples of the world consider a haven for the maintenance of security, sovereignty and political independence. In this way this Organization cannot be accused of following double standards which in themselves threaten international peace and security.

Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): May I at the outset express my delegation's thanks to you, Mr. President, for having rapidly agreed to this resumed session of the General Assembly to consider the situation of our brother country, Lebanon. We hope, as President Hraoui said yesterday, that the results will be commensurate with the aspirations of the international community to see justice done and restore the confidence of the peoples of the Middle East in the peace process, which has been threatened by the escalation of violence and continued, disproportionate Israeli attacks under the pretext of security concerns.

The Arab States and Lebanon addressed the Security Council at the beginning of the crisis, as the Security Council is the forum entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter. The Charter also indicates the means by which the Council can attain that objective. The Council, however, has been unable to have its cease-fire resolution implemented or to halt the destruction. The international community is still witnessing an escalation in Israel's military raids. Land, air and sea raids are causing considerable loss of life and property, as well as the destruction of towns and villages, and hundreds of thousands of people have had to flee their homes in a mass exodus. This violates the dignity and sovereignty of Lebanon.

This situation is intolerable. It is exemplified in Israel's massacre at Qana of civilians, including the elderly, women and children. This tragedy, an affront to the human conscience and one of the worst war atrocities perpetrated against innocent civilians, took place following the bombing of ambulances, the destruction of homes and the murder of entire families.

We deplore and condemn this brutal violence and these attacks on innocent civilians. We condemn the siege of these cities, the destruction of infrastructure and the cutting-off of water, electricity, food supplies and vital necessities. We condemn these acts, just as we condemn violence and all attacks against innocent civilians wherever they are committed.

My country, Jordan, was among the first in the region to call for ongoing efforts to establish peace in our region, which has suffered too long the consequences of war, and we have continued to do so over the years. In spite of our commitment to peace, we have had no success. Alongside our brothers and sisters, we have participated in the peace process begun in Madrid. First, Egypt concluded a peace agreement with Israel; then the Palestine Liberation Organization signed its agreements; and, in October 1994, Jordan was the third party to sign a peace treaty with Israel. This, we felt, was to be the first step on the path to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace to culminate in an agreement on Palestine and Lebanon, accepted by the respective populations, to ensure the viability and permanence of the accords.

We continue to believe that peace must be comprehensive and just, and accompanied by Israel's total withdrawal from all the Arab occupied territories. That is why we are making sincere efforts to fulfil our commitments and to implement the letter and the spirit of the provisions of the Treaty. We believe that peace is a necessity for all the peoples of the region and the foundation without which there can be no stability or economic development. In so doing, we wish to assert that the use of military force serves neither this noble objective nor those of peace-loving peoples, nor can it lay the foundations for peace and security. This use of force runs counter to the principles of the United Nations Charter, the Organization's resolutions and civilized behaviour.

My country's commitment to peace requires our devotion to its principles and to the prevalence of justice and legitimacy. We must also fight against any hindrance of, threat to or delay of the process. That is why we call on Israel to renounce its policy of brute force and to commit itself, together with all the States of the region, to dialogue and negotiation as the means of resolving conflicts and of arriving at a just and lasting peace.

Today's events in Lebanon and the situation of the populations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which represent violations of the most basic legal principles, create instability and chaos in the region that can only leave lasting wounds in the populations and shake their confidence in the credibility of the peace process and of Israel's commitment. They also deepen the feelings of frustration and threaten the climate necessary in the Middle East for ensuring mutual respect for rights and cooperation between the States of the region. Israel's military attack on Lebanon, now in its fourteenth day, does not promote that atmosphere necessary to the peace process.

Four years after the peace process was initiated, the international community must not allow a return to the logic of war and destruction or the use of violence in the service of any objectives. We had hoped that such methods were things of the past. We believe that any delay in restoring a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and on negotiated political settlements can only encourage violence, extremism, instability and insecurity. Palliatives and provisional measures do not achieve the desired results. We must address the very roots of the problem: Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, which is at the very heart of the problem there. Hence, the continuation of that occupation and disdain for United Nations resolutions will not bring peace, security or stability to the region.

The only guarantee that a climate of security and stability will be established between Israel and Lebanon, and that peace and cooperation will prevail, resides in implementation of resolution 425 (1978), which demands Israel's full withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The end of occupation is the only assurance that violence will end and that progress will be achieved towards peace through negotiations. But violence and counter-violence can lead only to bitterness and return the entire region to a climate of confrontation, with disastrous consequences.

We in Jordan feel the pain of our brothers and sisters in Lebanon. We support Lebanon in its tribulations. We ask the General Assembly to condemn these violations, violence and use of force and to make every effort to help Lebanon endure the consequences of this situation, assist its institutions and people and protect their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In our region, progress towards the peace to which we all aspire, and which we consider to be the only viable path to development, can be made only through dialogue, the easing of tensions and the cessation of all acts of reprisal, such as the brutal acts we are currently seeing. History has taught us that these methods only deepen the wounds and can only be counterproductive.

Lebanon's need to address the General Assembly, with the support of the Arab Group, resulted from the Security Council's failure to put an end to the violence. We hope that this resumed session will achieve the desired results, that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution now before it and ensure its implementation.

Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman): We are very grateful to you, Sir, for having convened these important special meetings. There is no doubt that, under your skilful leadership, the Assembly will successfully address the vital issue of halting the ongoing aggression, led by Israel against Lebanon and its fraternal people, in order to maintain the momentum of the peace process in the Middle East and enhance international peace and security, for the benefit of all mankind.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the President of the fraternal State of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, and to pay him a special tribute for managing to be present here at this resumed session, in spite of all the difficulties, to brief us on the sufferings that the innocent Lebanese people have been enduring during the random shelling of Lebanon by the Israeli forces.

Over the past few years, the international community has witnessed significant progress in the course of the negotiations of the peace process in the Middle East, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli tracks. Through its participation in the Madrid conference peace talks and during the multilateral negotiations which followed the Conference, my country, the Sultanate of Oman, has vigorously called for the enhancing of the peace process in the Middle East. Furthermore, on many similar occasions, my country has repeatedly emphasized its principled and firm position calling for similar progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks in a manner conducive to a permanent and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions: 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

To reaffirm and consolidate this position, my country opened channels of negotiation with Israel stemming from its belief that such measures would improve and encourage the ongoing peace process in the Middle East for the prosperity of the people of that area.

Therefore, in our view, the relentless and continuous shelling by Israel of the towns, villages, coasts and seaports of Lebanon, in addition to the killing and displacing of civilian populations — among which are the elderly, women and children — not only constitute a flagrant violation of the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon, but also pose a serious threat to the peace efforts made so far to establish the principles of the peace process in the area.

The Israelis' recent aggression against Lebanon runs counter to the goals and objectives of the peace process in the Middle East. Therefore, my country calls upon all parties involved in this conflict to put the objective of achieving peace in the area above any personal and temporary benefits in order to avoid the recurrence of bloodshed and any further conflicts in the Middle East.

Based on all this, my delegation calls upon Israel to immediately halt its military attacks against Lebanon and pave the way for international diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of this conflict. We therefore call on the General Assembly at this resumed session to take an explicit and clear decision, with the adoption of a resolution calling upon Israel to stop its military actions and withdraw its forces beyond the internationally recognized borders agreed upon in accordance with the Security Council's resolutions and, in particular, resolution 425 (1978). On the same basis, we appeal to the international community to expedite its efforts to extend humanitarian emergency assistance in order to alleviate the sufferings of the fraternal people of Lebanon and to provide them with their basic needs.

In conclusion, while looking forward to the achievement of a genuine, permanent and peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, my Government is hopeful that the international community will take a firm stand against the Israeli military aggression in the area. Likewise, my Government is confident that the co-sponsors of the peace process in the Middle East will exert pressure on Israel to fulfil its obligations undertaken in the relevant peace agreement and reactivate the peace agreement on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks through the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Mr. Bjørn Lian (Norway): Allow me first of all to salute the presence in the General Assembly Hall yesterday of the President of the Lebanese Republic. We listened with the greatest attention to his statement, and we attach the utmost importance to the testimony he gave on behalf of his war-torn and troubled country. I would like to present our condolences to him and to his people for the tragic loss of civilian lives and the human suffering due to the current hostilities.

The presence in the General Assembly Hall of the President of Lebanon underscores the highly important role played by the United Nations in the Middle East and in the attempts to achieve, preserve and uphold peace in this region. Norway is currently the largest contributor of troops to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We therefore follow the situation with particular attention and concern, and we strongly regret that United Nations personnel are put at risk through actions we have witnessed during the hostilities.

Hezbollah's attacks from Lebanese villages and close to United Nations positions are totally unacceptable. And we strongly deplore the Israeli shelling of the UNIFIL position in Qana which resulted in more than a hundred Lebanese refugees losing their lives and in casualties suffered by UNIFIL personnel. We regret that the Israeli actions are out of proportion to the attacks by Hezbollah against targets in Israel. The Norwegian Government once again urges both Hezbollah and Israel to immediately cease all violent actions in the area, and in this context expresses its full support for Security Council resolution 1052 (1996).

We fully support the ongoing diplomatic efforts to put an immediate stop to the violence. We hope that the parties will be able to find a lasting solution to the conflict between Israel and Lebanon as part of a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict, guaranteeing Israel's security and preserving Lebanon's sovereignty, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The peace process in the Middle East is now in a critical phase due to the acts of terror in Israel and the violence in southern Lebanon. Violence must be stopped if the peace process is to get back on track. We remain convinced that there is no alternative to the ongoing peace process. We must not forget the considerable progress already made, nor that the negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have already been fruitful despite problems and delays. This peace process, therefore, deserves our continuous and full support.

The economic and social problems in the Palestinian areas due to the border closure are of great concern to us. At the informal meeting in Brussels on 12 April of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee which coordinates assistance to the Palestinian areas and which Norway has the honour to chair, we discussed the serious economic crisis in the West Bank and Gaza, and an emergency assistance programme was presented.

The Israeli decision to redeploy in Hebron, as agreed in the Oslo II Agreement, is a positive signal for the future of the peace process. This is true even though it should have taken place in March. Another positive signal is the decision of Israel and the PLO to commence the final-status negotiations as scheduled in May this year. We indeed hope that the situation will be stabilized so that the parties can carry on with negotiations, both between Israel and the PLO and between Israel and Syria.

Many unresolved problems remain between Israel and Syria. However, the two countries have both shown a will to move towards peace. We hope that the present phase of violence will come to an end so that the countries in the region can continue their efforts towards a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Owada (Japan): I should like to preface my statement by welcoming His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, whose very presence here underscores the gravity of the situation in his country. On behalf of the people and Government of Japan, I should like to ask him to convey my sincere condolences to all those who have suffered in the hostilities through the loss of loved ones and the destruction of their homes.

The hostilities in Lebanon appear to be continuing unabated; each day brings shocking reports of renewed violence and additional casualties. Last week, on 18 April, the Security Council met in emergency session to respond specifically to the deplorable incident in which the shelling of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) position in southern Lebanon claimed scores of lives, including those of UNIFIL personnel. In that forum, Japan, together with other Members of the Organization, strongly urged all parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint and to cease fighting. As an expression of the common will of the international community, the Council adopted resolution 1052 (1996), calling for the immediate cessation of hostilities. It is most regrettable that, despite this, there is so far no sign that the parties concerned are complying with the resolution. The Government of Japan once again expresses its sincere sympathy to the families of the victims of the hostilities.

There is a very real danger that this seemingly unrestrained spiral of violence could threaten the Middle East peace process itself. It is essential to achieve a lasting, political solution to the present crisis so that the regional peace process may be resumed. On its part, my Government, through a high-level diplomatic channel, has urged each of the parties directly concerned to cease hostilities. It has also requested other countries concerned to use their influence to achieve that end. Japan sincerely appreciates the diplomatic initiatives of the international community, particularly those of the United States, France and Russia, together with those of other countries in the region, and is ready to extend its full support and cooperation to those efforts. It is Japan's earnest hope that the diplomatic efforts will be successful and lead to an improved political environment which will enable us to realize a full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). But it bears repeating that no progress will be made until the parties concerned cease their hostilities.

As for my country, Japan is determined to contribute, to the best of its ability, to the restoration of peace in Lebanon. My Government will also extend humanitarian relief — including emergency grant assistance — to help ease the suffering of the Lebanese people.

I should like to conclude my statement today by reaffirming the commitment of the Government of Japan to remain actively involved in international efforts to support and facilitate the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Misić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): My Government joins in the chorus of countries calling for an immediate cessation of all military hostilities in Lebanon. We must condemn in the strongest terms all attacks against civilians, and particularly the horrendous attack against the United Nations base, which killed scores of innocents, as well as those attacks that have killed Lebanese civilians in their homes throughout Lebanon. We also strongly condemn the continuing violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We, as victims of terror, condemn at the same time all the terrorist acts against civilians that we have been witnessing for decades in that part of the world.

Nothing can justify the killing of children, men and women. No one can reach any decent and noble goal through killing. Everyone in this vicious circle of violence is always a loser. But we particularly condemn any and all acts of a military nature that are designed to indiscriminately kill, maim or injure civilians. As victims of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide, we deplore all mass-population movements caused by military attack or by the threat of such attack. The undertaking of acts that lead to the imposition of conditions which create hardship for masses of civilians and which are in effect a form of collective punishment must also be denounced as contrary to international humanitarian law.

The horrendous results of the shelling of the United Nations compound make us wonder about the intent of Israeli policies, but it is clear that they have targeted Lebanese civilian infrastructure and people. Even if this particular shelling of the United Nations base was the result of an accident, as we would like to believe, it shows at least an inadequate regard for innocent human life. Therefore, though the intent to kill innocent civilians may be missing, a reckless disregard for civilian lives as well as for United Nations authority has been shown.

We must make this point for the future. We would like to see a solution to this tragedy based on the clear sovereignty of Lebanon; full respect for civilians lives; support for the efforts of the United Nations forces on the ground, especially as they relate to the humanitarian mission; an immediate end to the fighting; and a full commitment to the peace process, involving the Palestinians and all Israel's neighbours.

Finally, we hope to see an initiative which will create the conditions for a full resumption of the process leading to a comprehensive peace in the region. Clearly, the rights of all the peoples of the region to live without fear must be the cornerstone of such a peace, but as the United Nations strives to achieve such a goal we cannot ignore the tenets of international law and the principles for which the United Nations stands.

The people of the region deserve not only peace, but peace through justice, and it is the obligation of the United Nations to bring about these conditions for all the peoples of the region.

Mr. Londoño Paredes (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The whole world learned with horror of the action of the Israeli military forces that caused the massacre of innocent men, women and children who were refugees in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) compound in Qana, where UNIFIL personnel from the Republic of Fiji also perished.

This is another chapter in the bloody confrontation going on in the Middle East, an additional bombshell harming efforts to obtain a just and lasting peace in the region. The death of defenceless civilians, whatever the pretext and whatever the circumstances cannot be justified or excused, and it deserves our deepest condemnation. Mistakes cannot be overlooked simply because they are mistakes and, therefore, must entail moral, political and financial responsibilities. The magnitude and seriousness of certain actions cannot depend on the nationality of the dead.

We are profoundly concerned over the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. We urge that Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected, and we condemn the Israeli occupation of the southern part of its territory. We reaffirm the need for the prompt and unconditional implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), as an indispensable precondition for peace and security in the region, as well as for the release of all the Lebanese citizens detained in Israeli camps.

Colombia calls for the cessation of hostilities and for resolution of the conflict by the peaceful means for the settlement of disputes envisaged in the Charter. We also call for respect for the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders. We reject violence and terrorism, whatever their origin, and call upon the parties involved in the grave situation that the region is suffering to persist in their efforts to consolidate peace, with full respect for the norms of international humanitarian law, since in this framework respect for human rights cannot be in one direction alone.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): By convening this resumed session, the General Assembly has asserted its responsibility as enshrined in the Charter, especially given the inability of the Security Council to address what is clearly a development which threatens international peace and security.

Yesterday, the Lebanese President in his statement beseeched us that the usurped rights of Lebanon be restored. He embodied the indomitable spirit of Lebanon when he insisted that Lebanon shall not die. At this moment, when Lebanon pleads for survival, the international community represented at this Assembly must stand on the side of the aggrieved and ensure the survival of sovereign nations, even if the Security

Council is unable to play any role, given the refusal of certain Powers to rise above allegiance to Israel.

In the last 14 days Israel has continuously bombarded Lebanon, with no sign of let-up, irrespective of the mounting civilian casualties and the destruction of the Lebanese infrastructure. As the Lebanese President stated, his country is being made a victim of other peoples' war. Yet, while seemingly frantic diplomacy goes from pillar to post, the United Nations is not allowed to play a role and no condemnation of Israel is allowed in the Council. Security Council resolution 1052 (1996), adopted on 18 April 1996, one week after Israel started its military actions, was a feeble whimper, calling for a cease-fire, with no condemnation of Israel's actions.

Many of us had expected that, given the grave situation in Lebanon, the Council would call for Israel to cease its attacks on Lebanon and its people and to withdraw from southern Lebanon, in conformity with the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which that same body adopted 18 years ago. But, to our dismay, the politics and power play of Powers close to Israel hampered the aspiration of the majority to see the conflict brought to an end and to allow justice and the rule of law to prevail.

The Malaysian delegation does not accept the contention that all aspects of the Middle East conflict, including Lebanon, are not within the purview of the United Nations. This sidelines the United Nations, discredits it further and allows power imperatives of certain countries to hold sway on the issue.

It is left to the General Assembly to comprehensively address this issue at this critical moment. The international community is duty-bound to guarantee the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We believe the United Nations, through this Assembly, can play a more important role, particularly in articulating in unambiguous terms our solidarity with and support for Lebanon.

Lebanon has just entered its post-civil-war recovery period. After two decades of instability, the Lebanese Government has been rebuilding its infrastructure in order to provide a better living for its people and to restore the country to its rightful status in the international community. Peace and stability have always been aspirations of the Lebanese people. It would certainly be unfair and unjustified for the international community to ignore those aspirations. The support of the international community is therefore needed more than ever to restore peace and stability to Lebanon. Israeli acts of aggression must come to an immediate end.

The prospects for peace in the region following the Madrid conference four years ago were unprecedented, breaking established mind-sets and setting in place a building block for peace and security. Unfortunately, the latest developments that the world is witnessing in Lebanon are a grim throwback to conditions we once thought to have been overcome.

The international community cannot ignore the dangers facing the Middle East as a result of actions continuing in Lebanon. The root cause of the problem is Israel's continued occupation of southern Lebanon. It is inadmissible that the international community should allow the continued infringement of the territorial integrity of Lebanon and the violation of its sovereignty, which threaten the very statehood and survival of that country. The Lebanese President stated yesterday that Lebanon will readily guarantee the security of all its areas if Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon. A Lebanese Government, unthreatened by Israel and with southern Lebanon free of Israeli occupation, can deal with all the complex strands of the Middle East conflict, including Israeli security. But there must be withdrawal.

The issue of Israel's security is recognized and upheld. This will be made possible within the context of a comprehensive and durable agreement. All parties must be brought to negotiation. Nothing can be achieved through violence and intimidation, but a great deal can be lost if this type of action continues. Israel cannot bludgeon out of existence all that it sees as its enemies, since its actual occupation of southern Lebanon provides the reason for actions against Israel. As Malaysia has stated before, Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon not only violates the sovereignty of Lebanon but is militarily indefensible. By being there, Israel becomes exposed and vulnerable to all parties that oppose Israeli occupation.

The use of military force will not ensure peace and security for Israel. There will not even be any short-term benefit. No security equation or presence in southern Lebanon has been changed by its inflicting hardships on the Lebanese people. At this moment, anger and hatred are again emerging in the region. The Israeli leadership is losing international credibility after so much sacrifice and so many brave efforts earlier.

Malaysia has consistently voiced its support for a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict that would bring peace to all countries in the region in line with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). Malaysia would like to reaffirm our total commitment to peace and security in Lebanon and an end to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. The way to protect Israeli security is through a political compact with neighbours, and the integrity of Lebanon must be part of that compact. At this critical juncture, in which the situation is delicate and fragile, every effort must be made to consolidate the peace process.

In conclusion, let me join preceding speakers in expressing our full support for the draft resolution which Lebanon hopes this Assembly will adopt at the end of the debate. The elements of the draft resolution are consistent with the call made by the Lebanese President yesterday to condemn Israeli attacks; for an immediate cease-fire; to assist in meeting the humanitarian needs of Lebanon; and for the full and immediate implementation of resolution 425 (1978). This Assembly must do what the Security Council was not able to do: manifest courage and a sense of fair play and justice for Lebanon and all its people.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mexico is participating in this resumed session of the General Assembly aware that in this case, as in many others, the Security Council has not been able to find formulas to prevent further bloodshed, produce an immediate cessation of hostilities or establish security measures to guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon as soon as possible and the security of all the countries of the region, including Israel.

Once again, the Middle East has fallen prey to violence. In recent days, military positions and civilian settlements have been bombed and attacked. Even the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has been a victim of this new escalation.

My Government profoundly deplores the loss of lives, particularly those of innocent civilians, and we regret the damage to property. We are deeply saddened by these acts of force against Lebanon, a country with which Mexico has excellent relations and which for many years has had to endure all manner of attack, violation and interference. Like all States of the region, Lebanon, a State Member of the United Nations, deserves to live in peace within secure boundaries. Its population has the right to enjoy a dignified existence, free from the threat or use of force. The Lebanese people has the inalienable right to the full exercise of its sovereignty and independence.

As I have said, the basis for a just and lasting solution to the question of the Middle East is respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the countries of the region. In the case of Lebanon, this includes strict compliance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Recent events reaffirm our conviction that the question of Lebanon must be an integral part of the peace process in the Middle East. In this context, we are concerned that in its resolution 1052 (1996) the Security Council did not explicitly reaffirm the provisions of resolution 425 (1978).

Mexico understands that the Security Council must on occasion act prudently in fulfilling its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. This does not mean, however, a reduction in its duty to proceed with the utmost objectivity to consider any matter brought to its attention. We expected a firmer stand from the Security Council with respect to the use of force, the loss of human life and the suffering of the civilian population.

Through me, the Government of Mexico appeals for an end to the violence in Lebanon. It urges the parties to the conflict to resolve their differences through negotiation, without the use of force. In reiterating its firm support for the peace process in the Middle East, my Government reaffirms its conviction that violence does not resolve conflicts — it only exacerbates them. We trust that all those concerned will soon take the path of reason and dialogue and thus lay the foundations for a firm, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.